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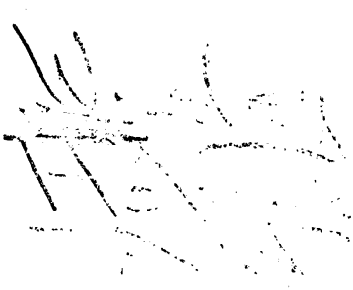

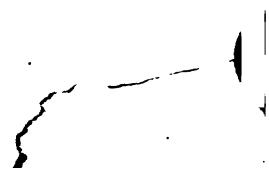

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OR,

WESLEY AND HIS TIMES.

BY

REV. D. HOLMES, A.M.,

AUTHOR OF "PURE GOLD," ETC. ETC.

"Eighty-seven years have I sojourned on this earth endeavoring to do good."—*J. Wesley.*

"Wesley was a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature, whose genius in government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered as the highest good of his species."—*Macaulay.*

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PREFACE.

The life and character of John Wesley are public property. Like most men who have acquired an enduring fame and a place in history, he has had the fortune, or misfortune, to be written in different and conflicting characters, by authors who have formed dissimilar tastes and views under the influence of some peculiar type of philosophy or religion.

Some of his biographers have been sufficiently laudatory to satisfy his warmest friends—perhaps too much so for accuracy and impartiality; others have marred their productions by personal interests and feelings; and still others have interspersed their pages with sly innuendoes, bitter sarcasms and spiteful flings at "ambition," "enthusiasm," and "superstition," which though intangible, like ghosts, seemed to haunt them at every step of their progress.

We do not include in this description the Life of Wesley by Richard Watson. This is both able and impartial, though too much loaded with doctrinal discussions to be read with interest by all classes.

The title prefixed to the following pages expresses

TRANSFER FROM C. G. MAY 1923

accurately the nature and design of the work. It does not claim to be a biography, in the full sense of that word—nor yet a detailed history of the Wesleyan Reformation. It is rather a collection of facts and incidents, as found in the character of the times, in the life and labors of the Wesleys, and the progress of the work of religion promoted by them, combined, not with strict regard to chronological order, according to the best judgment of the author. It is dedicated to the admirers of Wesley, and to all Christians, and the interests of Christianity generally.

In preparing this work, the author has made free use of whatever suited his purpose in the biographies and histories by Whitehead, Southey, Watson, Jackson, Bangs, Sandford, and others; but has chiefly consulted the copious journal of J. Wesley. The usual marks have been employed to distinguish borrowed matter from that which is original.

The book is now given to the public without apology, and with little solicitude for its fate. If any shall find as much pleasure and profit in reading as the author has in writing it, neither the author nor public will regret its publication.

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CHAPTER I.

"And conscious truth and honesty are made
To rise and fall like other wares of trade."—MOORE.

"Even grave divines submit to glittering gold,
The best of consciences are bought and sold."
DR. WOLCOT'S *Peter Pinder*

"What is a church?—Our honest sexton tells,
'Tis a tall building, with a tower and bells."—CRABBE.

THE commanding position and immense power of the British Empire, have, for three centuries, qualified it to contribute largely in shaping the political and religious features of the civilized world. Few, if any, revolutions have occurred within that period, either in church or state, in which that nation has not been in one way or another a distinguished actor; and she now forms a centre of political and moral light and power unrivalled in grandeur and control, and from which moral illumination and effective influence are diverging in every direction, and extending to the remotest nation under heaven.

The time will doubtless come, when (if she be not recreant to her trust) America will take precedence in all these respects; but that time is not yet. She possesses the attributes of superior greatness, but they are not yet sufficiently combined and harmonized; they lack solidarity and concentration, and are yet too much under the power of elements antagonistic to the highest and most perfect ends of civil and religious rule.

The character of the eighteenth century was, for the most part, formed by the agency of causes having their existence, if not their origin, in the century preceding, and which extended their moulding influence to subsequent times. The revolution of 1688, which put an end to the dynasty of the Stuarts, also terminated the struggle for political ascendency in the nation between Protestantism and Popery, in favor of the former, by placing the sceptre of power in the firm grasp of William, Prince of Orange. This revolution was the last that has occurred on British ground. A conviction has seized the public mind that there is a better way to correct abuses, whether in church or state, than by a resort to arms,—that the means of effecting

every improvement demanded by the wants of society may be found within the constitution itself, and without the enactments of war and blood. To this conclusion, so true in itself, and so precious to the heart of every philanthropist and Christian, the public sentiment, not merely of England, but of the civilized world, is rapidly tending.

Not only was the question of supremacy between Protestantism and Popery settled by the contests of the seventeenth century, but also certain differences between the people and the crown, touching liberty on the one hand and prerogative on the other, were so composed, that very little difficulty has arisen on these accounts since that period. The fierce struggle which had continued during four reigns between the throne and the parliament, terminated with the reign of James II., and thenceforth the executive and legislative departments of state have been so united that neither has impeded the just measures of the other—neither has felt impelled to assume the prerogatives of the other, on supposition that the public good required it. No doubt other advances will yet be made in Britain

in respect to liberty and equal rights—important privileges will yet be claimed by the people and conceded by the crown: but one point of vast importance has been gained. It is established, that a constitutional monarchy, under suitable guards and restrictions, is not incompatible with civil and religious liberty, and that the throne is never more secure than when sustained—not by the strong arm of tyranny—not by standing armies—but by the confidence and affections of a free and grateful people.

We shall commit a great mistake, however, if we suppose the contests which took place in the seventeenth century between the several religious communities, who in that age struggled for ecclesiastical and political pre-eminence, *tended*, or were *designed* even, to promote the spirit and practice of true Christianity. Some of the grosser superstitions and more palpable theoretic errors, were doubtless thrown off, but the immediate fruit was adverse, rather than otherwise, to the spirit of vital godliness and true piety. A large body of the common people were, most likely, sincere in their zeal for what they believed to be essential in doctrine and ritual;

though, even with them, the mightier matters of the law, "judgment and the love of God," were mostly disregarded.

With the principal actors in those scenes which revolutionized the kingdom, and in which, *professedly*, a pure religion was the object, selfishness was the *real* motive power and ruling principle. They were not governed by the dictates of conscience, or an honest desire to please God and promote his glory. Their object seemed to be, to take such advantage of the religious tendencies of the public mind as would be most likely to advance them to place and power; and if they could gain their end and enjoy the honors and emoluments of office, they had little care whether the Author of that religion, for the purity of which they had manifested so much concern, were honored or blasphemed.

This indeed was not more true of the men of that, than of some other periods. This corruption of heart and selfishness of purpose have marked the conduct of mankind, more or less, in every age of the Church; particularly when religion has been allied to the State, and has leaned upon the secular power for protection and propa-

gation. It is a fruit of that depravity which in one way or another, shows itself under all circumstances, and, even in matters of religion, demands that personal and worldly interests should take precedence of the claims of God.

This mystery of iniquity began to work in the apostolic age, which was doubtless the purest age of the Christian Church which has yet transpired, though not the purest we are authorized to expect. But a vast change took place in subsequent times. That unholy alliance consummated between the Church and the Roman Emperor, became the fruitful source of corruption and degeneracy. The Church and its ministry became secularized. The Emperor, just established upon his throne, flattered the clergy, to secure their influence. The clergy, now escaped from persecutions and confiscations on account of their religion, flattered the Emperor, to secure and retain his favor and patronage. By mutual flattery, they were mutually corrupted. The Church and ministry lost the spirit of their calling, and sought by temporal power and worldly policy, to effect, what, in the order of God, can only be achieved by personal piety, Christian duty, and

holy living, with an humble dependence on the blessing of heaven.

Corrupt and selfish men became leaders in the Church, and gave direction to her affairs—the various grades of office in the ministry were filled by unprincipled incumbents—the doctrines and worship became modified by the vicious errors and superstitions of heathenism—the glory departed, and little else was seen than a huge mass of moral putrefaction.

This state of things continued, and waxed worse and worse for ten centuries. During this long night only here and there a ray of light streaked the moral horizon; and these soon disappeared to leave a sense of darkness more oppressive and profound. An occasional flicker from the socket of the lamp of truth, or a spasmodic gasp for the breath of divine life, with now and then a fitful struggle to rise to a state of comparative decency, not to say purity, constituted all the proofs given by that polluted thing called the Church, that moral life was not wholly extinct.

And that glorious revolution and reformation, effected under God through the instrumentality

of Martin Luther, did not operate an entire cure of the disease which had fastened with so much virulence upon the vitals of the Church. Luther was successful in his attacks upon celibacy, purgatory, indulgence, and some other monstrous corruptions which Romanism had engrafted upon true religion; and multitudes were enabled to follow his example, and throw off the rubbish beneath which truth had been buried for ages: but few went farther than this. The Reformation, in that age, did little else than relieve the Church of doctrinal absurdities and abominations. With few exceptions, the religion of the heart was poorly understood, and still less practised; and at the close of his singularly eventful and useful life, the great Reformer himself lamented the destitution of practical godliness. With all their hatred of popery and its horrible corruptions, his followers had not learned the importance of experimental and practical piety.

In England the Reformation was less complete than in Germany. It had a beginning by no means auspicious. It had no Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, or Knox, to open channels for its progress, and stamp it with an enduring character.

"England," says Macaulay, "has no such names to show: not that she wanted men of sincere piety, of deep learning, of steady and adventurous courage. But these were thrown into the background. Elsewhere men of this character were the principals. There they acted a secondary part. Elsewhere, worldliness was the tool of zeal. There, zeal was the tool of worldliness. A king, whose character may be best described by saying that he was despotism itself personified, unprincipled ministers, a rapacious aristocracy, a servile parliament,—such were the instruments by which England was delivered from the yoke of Rome. The work which had been begun by Henry, the murderer of his wives, was continued by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest. Sprung from brutal passion, nurtured by selfish policy, the Reformation in England displayed but little of what had in other countries distinguished it—unflinching and unsparing devotion, boldness of speech, singleness of eye. These were indeed to be found; but it was in the lower ranks of the party which opposed the authority of Rome, in

Hooper, Latimer, Rogers, and Taylor. Of those who had any important share in bringing the alteration about, the excellent Ridley was perhaps the only person who did not consider it a political job." With these facts in view, it cannot appear wonderful that the English Church should come through the Reformation but half reformed. She broke away from the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff, but it was only to receive laws from another Pope, in the person of Henry the Eighth, whose standard of orthodoxy was made up of the dogmas of his own bigoted faith, tyrannically enforced by his irresponsible power, and who was quite as ready to burn heretics as "His Holiness" had ever been.

The state of things was little better under Elizabeth, who never allowed liberty of conscience during the forty years of her reign. In repudiating Rome, therefore, the English church only exchanged one form of despotism for another equally odious and detestable.

The union between the Church and State, at first so fatal to her purity, being still continued, though disconnected from the authority of Rome, prevented a successful Reformation. When such

union exists, the Church will never be more pure than the government with which it is allied, and Christ continues to be crucified in the house of his professed friends. The state being the fountain of ecclesiastical power, the streams which flow from it, share its corruption. The revolutions which took place between the death of Elizabeth and the accession of William and Mary, though decidedly favorable to civil liberty, seem to have worked much less advantage to the Church; and as the elements of both Church and State became settled under the reign of the Prince of Orange, they remained, with no material change, at the commencement of the eighteenth century.

Religion existed in the books of the Reformers, in the articles and ritual of the Church, in the heads of persecuting bigots, but with rare exceptions, the people were strangers to its influence upon the heart.

When religion is only known as embracing a catalogue of dogmas and a round of external ceremonies, it forms no sufficient security against the decay of public morals. Correct theory, democratic government, and wise and judicious

ecclesiastical rules are not indifferent in their influence upon vital and practical godliness; but these, however perfect in themselves, do not produce holiness of heart, or purity of life. These fruits of Christianity are formed under a higher and more sacred influence. The doctrinal views of the English Church as put forth in the thirty-nine articles, are, in the main, correct; and her ritual and service, are by common consent acknowledged to be excellent. Yet for the most part there is a signal failure in the acquisition of evangelical piety, among those who worship under these forms and ceremonies. This was lamentably true of the age of which we are speaking.

The tendencies of the public mind in the first part of the eighteenth century are generally acknowledged to have been decidedly irreligious. The great majority of the clergy were unconverted men: and the body of the people, both in and out of the various religious communities, paid but a slight deference to the obligations of religion, or of morality. Moreover, much pains were taken at this time to spread the principles of infidelity. "The pernicious and wicked writings of Hobbes, Toland, Blount, Collins, Mande-

ville, Shaftesbury, Morgan, Woolston, and Chubb, were then in full circulation: and the higher and more influential classes of society, were especially corrupted by their poison. The evil was aggravated by the appearance about the middle of the century, of the infidel speculations of Bolingbroke. By many it was regarded as a settled point that Christianity was a fable which they were justified in holding up to public reprobation and scorn." (*Jackson's Centenary.*) The state of things both in the hierarchy, and among the dissenters, was most deplorable. There were a few most devoted and excellent Christians among both clergy and laity, who had not defiled their garments, and who literally wept and mourned over the desolations of Zion. If not literally, yet certainly in a moral and metaphorical sense, they might have adopted the language of the prophet Elijah, "Lord, they have slain thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." They raised their warning voice against the corruptions of the times, but the tide swept onward with a fearfully increasing momentum.

It may be set down as a singular fact, that though that age was distinguished for its learned men, though the field of philosophical inquiry was explored beyond any former example, the discoveries of Newton had filled the civilized world with astonishment, and the literature of the day was enriched with some of the most perfect specimens of composition to be found in any age or country, yet, except for purposes of controversy, the talents of the learned and profound were rarely employed within the domain of the Church; for such, the field of biblical literature seemed to have few attractions, and a gross ignorance of religious subjects generally prevailed.

To the truth of this last remark, even the clergy of the national church did not form an exception. There were a few stars of the first magnitude—a few really talented and learned men—learned in biblical and church lore—who consecrated their talents and acquisitions, to the cause of truth and righteousness. But the great mass of the clergy were sadly deficient, and many of them ignorant of the first principles of religion. As a whole, they were more distin-

guished for card-playing, wine-bibbing, and fox-hunting, than for anything elevated in character, or good and useful in their acquirements and influence as Ministers. That it may not appear that we have set down aught in malice, we will give the testimony of Bishop Burnet, a distinguished prelate of that day. In his "pastoral care," he holds the following language. "I am now in the seventieth year of my age; and as I cannot speak long in the world in any sort, so I cannot hope for a more solemn occasion than this, of speaking with all due freedom to the present, and to the succeeding ages. Therefore I lay hold on it to give free vent to those sad thoughts that lie on my mind both day and night, and are the subject of many secret mournings. . . . . I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this church, and by consequence over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough God knows; but that which heightens my fears arises chiefly from the inward state, into which we are unhappily fallen. I will in examining this, confine myself to the clergy. Our Ember weeks are the burden and

grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained, are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers. I mean the plainest part of the Scriptures, which they say, in excuse for their ignorance, that their tutors in the Universities never mention the reading of to them: so that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one of the contents even of the gospels. Those who seem to have read some few books, yet seem never to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the catechism, how short and plain soever. They cry and think it a sad disgrace to be denied orders: though the ignorance of some is such that in a well-regulated state of things, they would appear not knowing enough to be admitted to the holy sacrament.

"This," continues the pious prelate, "does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many, who having got into orders, come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures or any one good

book since they were ordained; so that the small measure of knowledge upon which they got into holy orders, not being improved, is in a way to be quite lost: and then they think it a great hardship to be told they must know the Scriptures, and the body of divinity better before they can be trusted with the care of souls. These things pierce one's soul, and make him often cry out. O that I had wings like a dove: for then would I fly away and be at rest."

The same facts in relation to the general character of the clergy of that day were subsequently brought out by Mr. J. Wesley, in defending the employment of lay preachers as helpers in the work of the ministry. "It has been loudly affirmed," says he, "that most of those persons now in connection with me, who believe it their duty to call sinners to repentance, having been taken immediately from low trades; tailors, shoemakers, and the like; are a set of poor stupid, illiterate men, that scarce know their right hand from the left: yet I cannot but say, that I would sooner cut off my right hand than suffer one of them to speak a word in any of our chapels, if I had not reasonable proof that

he had more knowledge in the holy Scriptures, more knowledge of himself, more knowledge of the things of God, than nine in ten of the clergymen I have conversed with either in the University or elsewhere."—(*Sermons.*) In his "earnest appeal to men of reason and religion," he holds the following language,—addressing himself to clergymen: "Ye know in your own hearts (all that are candid men: all that are not utterly blinded by prejudice) that we 'labor to have a conscience void of offence both toward God, and toward man.' Brethren, I would to God, that in this ye were even as we. But indeed (with grief I speak it) ye are not. There are among yourselves, ungodly and unholy men: openly, undeniably such: drunkards, gluttons, returners of evil for evil, liars, swearers, profaners of the day of the Lord. Proof hereof is not wanting if ye require it. Where then is your zeal against these? A clergyman so drunk he can scarce stand and speak, may in the presence of a thousand people (at Epworth in Lincolnshire), set upon another clergyman both with abusive epithets and open violence. And what follows? Why, the one is still allowed to dispense the

sacred signs of the body of Christ: but the other is not allowed to receive them, because he is a field preacher! O ye pillars and fathers of the Church, are these things pleasing to Him who hath made you overseers of that church which he hath 'purchased with his own blood?'" One of the natural results of this condition of things among the clergy, was contempt of evangelical truth, and the open advocacy of heresy. Many writers labored to give such prominence to natural religion, as greatly to depreciate the necessity and importance of revealed religion, if not entirely to supersede it; and of those who still held on to the Bible as the rule of faith, many openly denied, or covertly explained away the divinity of Christ, the personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost, and other kindred doctrines, which make up the substance of Christianity.

In this unworthy cause, numbers of the clergy were found actively employed; the very learned and distinguished Dr. Samuel Clark, Rector of St. James's, and enjoying the friendship and patronage of the queen, appeared as the open advocate of Arianism, in which work he was assisted by the celebrated Whiston; and by Hal-

let and Peirce among the dissenters, with other writers of less renown. "A noisy prelate, Bishop Hoadly," says a recent writer, "seems to have given up all that is peculiar in Christianity in compliment to the deists, who cannot endure mysteries, and to have espoused substantially the Socinian heresy, while at the same time he retained his office and preferment in the established church. He was an endless writer of polemical pamphlets, and treatises, the spirit and tendency of which are thoroughly secular."

That the ignorance of the Scriptures which prevailed generally among the clergy, and the zeal manifested by some of them in the dissemination of the most pernicious forms of heresy, combined with the efforts of open and concealed infidels, who were enterprising and industrious in circulating their productions, should produce a copious harvest of corresponding fruit, need not excite surprise. These labors fell in with the lusts of human depravity; and what must always occur in like circumstances, was true in this case. The barriers of virtue were broken down, and the floodgates of licentiousness, and all manner of corruption, were hoisted. The

tide rushed on with resistless fury, until few seemed to think it worth their while to maintain the semblance of outward morality.

That we are not making out too strong a case, will be sufficiently evident after reading the following paragraphs from the published writings of a few distinguished men of that day, who saw the prevailing corruption of the times, and lifted a voice against it.

Archbishop Secker. "Though it is natural to think those evils the greatest which we feel ourselves, and therefore mistakes are easily made in comparing one age with another; yet in this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of this nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and bad in itself as any can be, must of necessity bring in all others after it. Indeed it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle, in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes in the

lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. And God knows, so far from stopping, it receives, through the ill designs of some persons, and the inconsiderateness of others, a continual increase. Christianity is now ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve; and the teachers of it without any at all."

Bishop Gibson. "They who live in these great cities (London and Westminster), or have had frequent recourse to them, and have any concern for religion, must have observed with great grief that profaneness and impiety are grown bold and open; that a new sort of a vice of a horrible nature, and almost unknown before in these parts of the world was springing up and gaining ground among us, if it had not been checked by the seasonable care of the civil magistration: that in some late writings, public stews have been openly vindicated, and public vices recommended to the protection of the government, as public benefits; and that great pains have been taken to make men easy in their sins, and deliver them from the restraints of conscience, by undermining all religion, and

promoting atheism and infidelity; and what adds to the danger, by doing it under specious colors and pretences of various kinds. . . . And all, or most of these writers, under color of pleading for the liberties of mankind, have run into an unprecedented licentiousness in treating the important and serious concerns of religion in a ludicrous and reproachful manner."

A reference to the writings of the dissenters affords no relief to the dark shades of this picture.

Rev. John Hurrion. "The malignant opposition made to him (the Holy Spirit) by some, and the vile contempt cast upon him by others, are things which have quenched and grieved him, and caused him to depart to that degree, as hereby, almost all vital religion is lost out of the world. Hence it is that the glory of God in Christ, the faith, joy, and zeal of Christians, are under such a cloud at this day."

Dr. Watts. "I am well satisfied that the great and general reason (for the declension of the dissenting interest), is the decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men; and the little success which the ministrations of the gos-

pel have had of late in the conversion of sinners to holiness, and the recovery of them from the state of corrupt nature and the course of this world to the life of God by Jesus Christ, the declension of virtue and piety. . . . . is a general matter of mournful observation among all that lay the cause of God to heart; and therefore it cannot be thought amiss for every one to use all just and proper efforts for the recovery of dying religion in the world."

Many pages might be filled with similar complaints of the irreligion and corruption of the times. The few who had spiritual discernment enough to perceive the tendency of things; and love enough for God and his cause to feel shocked at the prevailing infidelity and impiety, raised the warning voice, and sought to check the impetuous torrent, but to no purpose; the river of death still swept onward, and moral desolation was spread on every hand. The very expressive language of Bishop Butler has often been quoted, and may properly close our list of authorities on this mournful subject.

"It is come," says he, "I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Chris-

tianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious. And, accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

Such, morally and religiously, was the state of society in England, during the first half of the eighteenth century. With just cause of national pride on account of the success of her arms abroad, and the world-wide renown of her philosophers, and other literary men, whose achievements in science and letters were exciting universal attention; the nation was nevertheless on the verge of ruin. Little as men generally think of it, there is an intimate, an inseparable connection between a nation's religion, and the public weal. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," in large communities as well as in respect to individuals: and woe to the nation which casts off the fear of God, and spurns the moral and religious restraints of his law and

government. He will not execute vengeance immediately, but show great forbearance—utter many warnings—offer many inducements to reformation—and employ many gracious influences and agencies to effect a return to allegiance and duty. But if, after all, there be no sign of contrition, no disposition to repent and return to God; if there be no power or authority in Church or State put forth to stay or control the profanity and licentiousness which have become public and common, such a nation will, as in the case of France, become, first a horrible scene of atheism and impiety, and then, of misery and desolation. To the verge of this precipice had the English nation approached at the time of which we are speaking. Another step would have engulfed her forever. Happy for her, and the world, that the agents raised up and employed by divine providence to prevent so great a catastrophe, were enabled to conduct their reforming enterprise to the goal of success.

CHAPTER II.

O, all-preparing Providence divine!
In thy large book what secrets are enrolled!
It is thy wisdom strangely that extends
Obscure proceedings to apparent ends.—DRAYTON.

This is thy work, Almighty Providence.—THOMSON.

The mother in her office, holds the key
Of the soul; and she it is who stamps the coin
Of character, and makes the being who would be a savage
But for her gentle cares, a Christian man.
Then crown her queen o' the world.—OLD PLAY.

GOD governs the world by a particular Providence, and it is his method to effect great purposes by agencies in themselves insignificant and feeble. Foreseeing what will be needed at a particular juncture, he selects and prepares the means he designs to use in secret, and in his own way. When his time to act publicly arrives, and his hand is seen, his wisdom, goodness, and power are so conspicuous in the instruments employed, and in the results they accomplish, that it is manifest to the world, the mind that guided was divine.

This peculiarity in the administration of God is illustrated in the general history of mankind; but more particularly in his dealings with the world as its moral governor. Thus God raised up Abraham to be literally the Patriarch of the Jewish nation, and spiritually the Father of the faithful in all coming time. Joseph and Moses were important links in the chain of providence which connected the design with its completion, both of whom were fitted for the parts they acted by adversity, and a severe course of mental and moral discipline. From a position combining great popularity with the most flattering prospects, David, the son of Jesse, was reduced to the condition of an outlaw; and by his painful extremities, taught divine dependence and self-reliance, before God would allow him to occupy the throne from which Saul and his posterity had been excluded. Martin Luther, the great Reformer of the sixteenth century, was educated and prepared for the task he afterwards performed, in a school of adversity so painful, that his existence was a continued conflict, and the hope and love of life at times almost taken away.

By a similar process, did the wisdom of God

select and prepare a Reformer for the eighteenth century. The Church and nation, as we have already seen, were verging to ruin. The wisest and best saw and felt that a fearful crisis had come, and unless a reform could be effected, a dreadful catastrophe was inevitable. But where shall the work commence? Who will strike the first blow? There is power enough in the government, wisdom and talent enough in the Church. If these powers and agencies will submit to divine direction, and seek a baptism for the work, the desired end may be secured. But alas! neither the government nor the Church are disposed to a work like this. There are many eminent men in the nation—eminent for age and experience—for talent, learning, wisdom, and, a few at least, eminent for piety; but no one of these is the chosen instrument of heaven to arrest the tide of irreligion, and save a nation from the impending judgments of God.

God sees not as man sees. His ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. "He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and the weak things of the world to confound things which are mighty:

and base things of the world and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

While infidels were diffusing their poisonous leaven among all ranks of society; and the sensual and profane were gratifying the worst passions of the human heart; and the Church was twice dead, and ready to be plucked up by the roots; and the few who were pious and spiritual were indulging in bitter and fruitless complaints at the degeneracy of the times; and the state, as was said of Gallio, "cared for none of these things;"—God had selected his agents, and was secretly and silently preparing them for the great battle which was soon to be waged with principalities and powers, and with spiritual wickedness in high places.

Upon two young men of humble, though respectable origin:—viz. John and Charles Wesley, did God bestow the enviable distinction of rousing the nation from spiritual stupor, and conducting while they lived, as principal instruments in his hand, the most glorious revival of religion that has occurred since Apostolic times:

a revival which has in a greater or less degree, influenced for good, every department of Protestant Christendom, and whose spirit and power will be felt to the end of time.

John and Charles Wesley, under divine Providence, the founders of those religious bodies, known in England, the United States and elsewhere, as Methodists, were born in Epworth in Lincolnshire: John in 1703, and Charles in 1708. Their father, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, was Rector of their native parish. His ancestors were distinguished for learning and piety among the Nonconformists: but his father dying when he was quite young, he was induced to forsake the cause of the dissenters at an early period in life, and attach himself to the State Church. As is usual in such cases, Mr. Samuel Wesley ran into the opposite extreme, and from being a dissenter, or Nonconformist, he became a strenuous defender of High Church principles.

To reward him for his service to the Church and crown as settled upon William and Mary, in uniting in defence of the Revolution of 1688, he was presented with the living of Epworth, and also that of Wroote in the same county. He

held the former more than forty years, and was distinguished for fidelity and zeal in discharging his parish duties. He was by no means deficient in talent and learning, as his published works afford honorable evidence.

Mrs. Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, and as might be expected from the eminent character of her father, she was educated with great care. Her father was Rector of the parish of Cripplegate, and was distinguished for depth of piety, and rare ability as a preacher and writer. Though acknowledged to be an "Israelite indeed," yet he suffered much in the cause of the Nonconformists. As death approached his soul was filled with foretastes of glory. He exclaimed, "I will die praising thee, and rejoice that others can praise thee better. I shall be satisfied with thy likeness: satisfied! satisfied! oh! my dearest Jesus, I come!" Thus died this excellent man in 1696, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

Mrs. Wesley is acknowledged to have been a woman of extraordinary abilities. She is said to have mastered the whole controversy between

churchmen and dissenters, when only thirteen years old. Like her husband, she renounced nonconformity and became a member of the Established Church, early in life, of which she remained a pious and devoted member to the day of her death. She died July 23, 1742. Concerning her death, Mr. J. Wesley inserted the following notice in his Journal.

"I left Bristol in the evening of Sunday 18th, and on Tuesday came to London. I found my mother on the borders of eternity. But she had no doubt or fear: nor any desire but (as soon as God should call) 'to depart and be with Christ.' About three in the afternoon, I went to my mother, and found her change was near. I sat down on the bedside. She was in the last conflict: unable to speak, but I believe quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward: while we commended her soul to God. From three to four, the silver cord was loosing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round her bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech. 'Chil-

dren, as soon as I am released, sing a hymn of praise to God.'"

The following epitaph, written by her son John, was placed upon her tomb-stone.

HERE LIES THE BODY OF

MRS. SUSANNA WESLEY,

THE YOUNGEST AND LAST SURVIVING DAUGHTER OF

DR. SAMUEL ANNESLEY.

"In sure and steadfast hope to rise,
And claim her mansion in the skies,
A Christian here her flesh laid down,
The cross exchanging for a crown.

"True daughter of affliction she,
Inured to pain and misery,
Mourned a long night of griefs and fears,
A legal night of seventy years.

"The FATHER then revealed his SON
Him in the broken bread made known.
She knew and felt her sins forgiven,
And found the earnest of her heaven.

"Meet for the fellowship above,
She heard the call, 'Arise, my love,'
'I come,' her dying looks replied,
And lamb-like as her Lord she died."

The advantage of such a parentage to the Wesleys was very great. From their earliest years, they had an example in the father, of all

that could render a clergyman respectable and influential: and in the mother, there was a sanctified wisdom, a masculine understanding, and an acquired knowledge which they regarded with just deference, after they became men and scholars. The influence of a piety so steadfast and uniform, joined to such qualities, and softened by maternal tenderness, could scarcely fail to produce effect. The pure and manly character, the patriarchal sense, the active and unwearied habits of the father, with the calm, reflecting and stable qualities of the mother, were in particular, inherited by Mr. John Wesley; and in him were most happily blended. A large portion of the ecclesiastical principles of the Rector of Epworth, was also transmitted to his three sons; but while Samuel and Charles retained them least impaired, in John, as we shall see, they sustained in future life, considerable modifications. It is an interesting fact, one worthy of profound attention, that most of those men, perhaps all, who have distinguished themselves as leaders in enterprises of extensive utility, and have left their mark upon the world, have been indebted to home influence for the pe-

culiar type—those strong points in their character which have given them their power and success; and in most cases this home influence has had its centre in the assiduous care, and moulding influence of a mother. Alfred the Great, who stands at the head of English Biography—was skilled in the science of government,—a proficient in philosophy, history, geography, astronomy, &c. &c.,—owed all his intellectual cultivation and true greatness to the ambition with which he was inspired by his mother, to attempt the reading of a manuscript of Saxon poetry.

Milton, in the full consciousness that he had been made what he was by home influence and discipline, in anticipation of uniting with his parental ancestors in a brighter, better world, sung:

> "We to ourselves, what time we seek again,
> Our native skies, and one eternal now
> Shall be the only measure of our being,
> Crowned all with gold, and chanting to the lyre
> Harmonious voice; shall range the courts above,
> And make the starry firmament resound."

It was under the tuition of his mother, that Dr. Dwight became skilled in the elementary branches of knowledge. The nursery in which

she reared her son was his school-room. Cecil said, "I detect myself to this day in laying down maxims in my family, which I took up at three or four years of age, before I could possibly know the reason of them."

Washington, the Father of his Country, and under God, the Founder of American liberty, received his stamp of character, under the skilful hand and holy influence of his excellent mother; and John Quincy Adams, with sparkling eyes, and emphatic manner, acknowledged to a friend, that under Providence, he was indebted to his mother for those principles and traits of character, which had made him good, great, and useful.

Without doubt the model character of Mr Samuel Wesley, sen. contributed its share in forming and developing the minds of his sons; but it is to the agency of his talented and devoted wife, that we must particularly refer, in accounting for the remarkable traits of character which became so conspicuous in the lives of the Wesleys.

As she had a very poor opinion of the common method of instruction which obtained in those

days, she took upon herself the instruction of her children in their early years. The following extract from one of her excellent letters to her husband when absent from home, will give some idea of the manner in which she performed her task.

"As I am a woman, so I am also mistress of a large family. And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it, lies upon you, yet in your absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care, as a talent committed to me under a trust from the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth. And if I am unfaithful to him, or to you in neglecting to improve those talents, how shall I answer unto him, when he shall command me to render an account of my stewardship? I take such a proportion of time as I can spare every night to converse with each child apart. On Monday I talk with Molly; on Tuesday with Hetty; Wednesday with Nancy; Thursday with John; Friday with Patty; Saturday with Charles; and with Emily and Suky together on Sunday." This was for the purpose of forming the religious character and principles of her children. In re-

spect to their general education, she lays down the following rules, which we take from another of her letters.

"In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will, and bring them to an obedient temper. . . . I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind. The children of this family (her own) were taught as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, which they were made to say, at rising and bedtime constantly, to which as they grew bigger, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some collects, &c.

"They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they wanted.

"None of them were taught to read till five years old, except Kizzy, in whose case I was overruled, and she was more years learning than any of the rest had been months." The following by-laws were established and observed in the family:—

1. "It had been observed that cowardice and fear of punishment, often lead children into lying, till they get a custom of it, which they cannot leave. To prevent this, a law was made, that whoever was charged with a fault of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it they should not be chastised. This rule prevented a great deal of lying.

2. "That no sinful action, as lying, pilfering, playing at church, or on the Lord's day, disobedience, quarrelling, &c. should ever pass unpunished.

3. "That no child should ever be chid or beat twice for the same fault; and that if they amended, they should never be upbraided with it afterwards.

4. "That every signal act of obedience, especially when it crossed upon their own inclination, should be always commended, and fre-

quently rewarded according to the merits of the case.

5. "That if ever a child performed an act, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted; and the child with sweetness directed how to do better for the future.

6. "That propriety be inviolably preserved, and none suffered to invade the property of another in the smallest matter.

7. "That promises be strictly observed. . . .

8. "That no girl be taught to work till she can read very well; and then that she be kept to her work with the same application, and for the same time that she was held in reading. This rule also is much to be observed: for the putting children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly, is the very reason why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never to be well understood."

These extracts are chiefly valuable, as they give an idea of the character of this remarkable woman, and show what thought and care she bestowed upon the rules she adopted, and the

policy she pursued in forming the mind and character, and perseveringly seeking the highest good of her children. Under her management, family government was reduced to a perfect system, the harmonious working of which promoted the happiness of the whole, while it educated both the mind and heart of each individual. By accustoming her children to live by rule, stringent in the exclusion of vice, yet liberal in allowing room for the cultivation of every noble and generous sentiment and action, she taught them the duty and habit of obedience, the power of self-government, the love of generosity and integrity; and conducted them to manhood, and to the field of active duty, well fitted for the stern realities of life, or to enter the list as competitors for the prize of human distinction.

Whether Mrs. Wesley supposed she saw talent in John which did not exist in her other sons, and therefore felt a stronger desire to develop and direct his mind; or whether she had any presentiment of his future celebrity, or providential indication of the important work he was to accomplish for God and his cause, is not clear: yet it is pretty certain that she felt a special in

terest in his improvement, and took great pains to aid him in those acquisitions which contributed so much to his subsequent distinction and success. Perhaps she felt herself not only justified in this, but impelled to it, by the almost miraculous escape he had from a horrible death when only seven years old. The account she gives of this is as follows:

"On Wednesday night, February the 9th, between the hours of eleven and twelve, our house took fire, by what accident God only knows. It was discovered by some sparks which fell from the roof upon a bed where one of the children lay, and burnt her feet. . . . While Mr. Wesley was carrying the children into the garden, he heard the child in the nursery cry out miserably for help, which extremely affected him: but his affliction was much increased, when he had several times attempted the stairs, then on fire, and found they would not bear his weight. Finding it was impossible to get near him, he gave him up for lost, and kneeling down, he commended his soul to God, and left him, as he thought, perishing in the flames. But the boy, seeing none come to his help, and being frightened, the chamber and bed being on

fire, he climbed up to the casement, where he was soon perceived by the men in the yard, who immediately got up and pulled him out, just in the article of time, that the roof fell in, and beat the chamber to the ground."

Mr John Wesley's account of the occurrence is a little different from this given by his mother. "I believe," says he, "it was just at that time (when they thought they heard me cry) that I awaked For I did not cry, as they imagined, unless it was afterwards. I remember all the circumstances as distinctly as though it was but yesterday. Seeing the room was very light, I called to the maid to take me up. But none answering, I put my head out of the curtains, and saw streaks of fire on the top of the room: I got up and ran to the door, but could get no farther, all the floor beyond being in a blaze. I then climbed upon a chest which stood near the window: one in the yard saw me, and proposed running to bring a ladder. Another answered, there will not be time: but I have thought of another expedient. Here, I will fix myself against the wall, lift a light man, and set him on my shoulders. They did so, and he took me

out of the window. Just then the roof fell; but it fell inward, or we had all been crushed at once. When they brought me into the house where my father was, he cried out, 'Come, neighbors! let us kneel down! let us give thanks to God! he has given me all my eight children; let the house go, I am rich enough.' The next day, as he was walking in the garden, surveying the ruins of his house, he picked up a leaf of his Polyglot Bible, on which just these words were visible, '*Vade; vende omnia quæ habes, et attalle crucem, et sequere me.*' 'Go: sell all thou hast, and take up thy cross and follow me.'"

Small events are often important in the influence they exert on individual character. It is quite probable that the mind of young Wesley, child as he was, received a religious impression by the circumstance above described, which never left him. He ever regarded it as a marked interposition of Providence, and, in allusion to it, denominated himself a "brand plucked from the burning."

This remarkable escape of her son John, seems to have made a very deep impression upon the

mind of Mrs. Wesley: and hence, in one of her private meditations, she alludes to it in the following language: "I do intend to be more *particularly* careful of the soul of this child that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been: that I may do my endeavor to instil into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."

"Her good endeavors (says Dr. Whitehead) were not without the desired effect; for I believe it was about this time, being about eight years old, that he began to receive the sacrament."

In 1714, being eleven years old, he was for the first placed under an instructor: and the place selected was the "Charter-house." Here his diligence and progress in learning attracted notice; for his quietness, regularity, and application, he became a favorite with the master, Dr. Walker; and through life "he retained so great a predilection for the place, that on his annual visit to London, he made it a custom to walk through the scene of his boyhood." "To

most men every year would render a pilgrimage of this kind more painful than the last; but Wesley seems never to have looked back with regret to the days that were gone; earthly regrets of this kind could find no room in one who was continually pressing onward to the goal." (Southey's Life.)

In this school he remained until sixteen years of age, when he was elected to "Christ Church, Oxford," where, under the tuition of Dr. Wigan, who was eminent for his classical knowledge, he pursued his studies with great diligence and equal success. Though in acquiring his education he seems to have aimed at the clerical profession, yet, from his entering college to about the time he received deacon's orders, it does not appear that he was distinguished for religious seriousness, or strictness in the observance of Church requirements. His natural temper in youth, was gay and sprightly, with an aptness for wit and humor, and his "perfect knowledge of the classics gave a polish to his wit, and an air of superior elegance to all his compositions."

It is not to be supposed that a young man of the education of Mr. Wesley, the foundation of

which had been laid by the pious attention and holy influence of his excellent mother, could enter into holy orders with a careless habit of mind. There was indeed very little in the manners of the clergy with whom he was conversant, either in the University or out of it, to impress his mind with the sanctity of their office or the purity of their order. But the example of his father, and the united, solemn, and reiterated precepts of both his parents, had fixed in his mind such lofty ideas of what a Minister of Christ should be, that they were not to be displaced by the careless spirit and lax morality of a time-serving Priesthood. He had lost somewhat of the seriousness and strictness with which he entered at Oxford, but as the time of his ordination approached he roused himself from the religious declension into which he had fallen, and gave his mind to those studies and reflections which were best adapted to fit him for his consecration.

This religious change in his feelings being disclosed in his correspondence with his mother, excited much interest in her mind, and called forth from her a reply which is marked by so much

ability and good sense that we cannot forbear giving the following extract.

"The alteration in your temper," says she, "has occasioned me much speculation. I, who am apt to be sanguine, hope it may proceed from the operations of God's Holy Spirit; that by taking your relish from earthly enjoyments, he may prepare and dispose your mind for a more serious and close application to things of a more sublime and spiritual nature. If it be so, happy are you if you cherish these dispositions; and now in good earnest resolve to make religion, the business of your life. For, after all, that is the one thing, that strictly speaking, is necessary; all things beside, are comparatively little to the purpose of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation through Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it, will abundantly reward your pains: if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears, than can be met with in a tragedy. This matter deserves great consideration by all, but especially by those designed for the Minis

try; who ought above all things to make their own calling and election sure; lest after they have preached to others, they themselves should be cast away."

This most excellent and seasonable advice and exhortation was not lost upon the mind of young Wesley. He turned his attention anxiously, and zealously to the subject of Christian duty. And we may judge somewhat of his religious tastes and feelings at this time, from the fact, that among the books he read on divinity and practical religion, we find the "Christian Pattern," by Thomas à Kempis, and Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living and Dying." He also read "Law's Serious Call," in doing which, he says, "I was more than ever convinced of the exceeding height, and depth, and breadth of the law of God. The light poured in so mightily upon my soul, that everything appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying him, as I had never done before. And by my continued endeavor to keep his whole law, inward and outward, to the best of my power, I was persuaded

that I should be accepted of him: and that I was even then, in a state of salvation."

The die was now cast: the life-long choice was made. He had come to that point in his history, when young men are most susceptible of being fascinated by fashion and display; when they are most liable to make a mistake, and when the consequences of a mis-step are not easily retrieved. But his judgment, his conscience, his understanding of the word of God; seconded as they were by the uniform examples, and repeated admonitions of his venerated parents, led him to prefer the path of humility and self-denial, with the approbation of God, to the worldly spirit, pompous vanity, and godless lives of those who had neither sense nor religion, but had entered the clerical profession because, in those times, it afforded the best chance of spending a life of idleness and worldly indulgence, without ending it in destitution and want. He chose to suffer with Christ, rather than "enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," and plant his dying pillow with thorns.

Having given his mind to the work of preparation for the ministerial office with the most con-

scientious care, he was ordained September 1725, by Dr. Potter, then Bishop of Oxford, being about twenty-two years of age. The year following he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College. He spent the summer after his election to the fellowship, with his parents, in Lincolnshire, and improved the opportunity it gave him of conversing at large upon those topics of experimental and practical religion, with which his mind was much occupied. In the fall, he renewed his studies at Oxford. His literary character was now established in the University: he was acknowledged by all parties to be a man of talents, and an excellent critic in the learned languages. His compositions were distinguished by an elegant simplicity of style, and justness of thought that strongly marked the excellence of his classical taste. His skill in logic, or the art of reasoning, was universally known and admired. "The high opinion that was entertained of him in these respects, was soon publicly expressed by choosing him Greek lecturer, and moderator of the classes on the seventh of November: though he had only been elected fellow of the College in March, was little more than twenty-three years

of age, and had not proceeded Master of Arts."* He took the Master's degree in 1727: in August of the same year, he became his father's curate; and in 1728, he received Priest's orders at the hands of Bishop Potter.

The year following, not being satisfied with the curacy, which he had undertaken at the importunate request of his father, and his return being desired by his college associates, he resumed his place in the classic halls of Oxford.

On his return to Oxford, he found that his brother Charles had formed a society in college, for mutual assistance in study, and mutual consultation as to the best methods of improving time. Of this society Mr. John Wesley became a member. Charles Wesley, as has been already stated, was a few years younger than his brother John. In several respects, which will be more fully illustrated in a future page, the two brothers differed in the prominent traits of their characters. John was thoughtful, meditative, serious, and not easily excited. He had acquired the power of self-government so perfectly, that he could command his time, and

* Whitehead.

steadily pursue his object in spite of the allurements of vice, or the temptations of fashionable life.

On the contrary, Charles was much more sprightly, vivacious, even gay, impulsive, and strongly inclined to fashionable pleasures. In these he continued to indulge for a while, at college, in spite of the exhortation of his parents, and of his brother John. But he finally saw and acknowledged the folly of his course, and became sincerely religious. His own account of himself is, that he "lost his first year at college in diversions; that the next he set himself to study that diligence led him into serious thinking; that he went to the weekly sacrament, persuading two or three others to accompany him; and that he observed the methods of study prescribed by the statutes of the university."

"This," says he, "gained me the harmless name of METHODIST."

The brothers were now united in spirit, pursuits, and design. Their spirit was that of humble inquiry, their pursuits, the acquisitions of the scholar and the Christian, and their design, a life of devotion and usefulness.

Their religious experience was yet defective; they had not yet entered into the "holy of holies," by the "blood of Jesus," but were yet worshipping in the outer court; and they were also unacquainted with the lofty and gracious designs which God would unfold through their agency; but, they had placed themselves under the guidance of his wisdom, and the protection of his providence, and their submissive spirit pronounced the changeless vow,

"To hallowed duty,
Here with a loyal and heroic heart,
Bind we our lives."—MRS. OSGOOD.

CHAPTER III.

Home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polished friends
And dear relations mingle into bliss.
THOMSON'S SEASONS

Then the purposes of life
Stood apart from vulgar strife,
Labor in the path of duty
Gleamed up like a thing of beauty.—C. P. CRANCH.

EXPERIMENTAL and practical Christianity is divinity in man, moulding him to the image of God, and inspiring him with divine benevolence. Its motives and inspirations, have no earthly parallel. Hence those who are really the subjects of its hallowing and controlling power, are not like other men. Their inspirations are divine, their sympathies more sacred and disinterested; and their motives are drawn from a more lofty, ennobling, and extended view of man's character, relations and destiny.

The world presents no specimens of disinterestedness like those furnished by Christianity.

And the reason is obvious; a stream cannot rise higher than its fountain. If the fountain be in the soil of human nature, the elevation and character of the stream, will correspond with its source. If the fountain be depraved and selfish, it can never send forth a stream, pure and divine.

As to Christianity, the fountain is in heaven: it is divine. In great compassion to a polluted and unhappy race, God has turned its gushing and refreshing streams through this world; and though they may sometimes be discolored in their progress by earthly impurities, yet there is usually enough of original purity and divinity remaining, to establish a broad line of distinction, between them and everything of a merely earthly origin.

Paul was not without his "infirmities," but he holds an honorable and conspicuous place amongst those who by divine power, have been raised far above the natural moral aspirations and powers of humanity. The spirit which led his divine Master to the cross, took full possession of his well-cultivated mind. His comprehensive intellect grasped with admiration the divine system of human redemption and salva-

tion, and to propagate its principles, he unreservedly laid himself upon the altar of sacrifice. What things were gain to him he counted loss, "yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

It is not wonderful that those actuated by such a spirit, and moved by such motives, should appear in the light of enthusiasts to a cold, calculating, and selfish world. This charge—enthusiasm, was brought against the true prophets of the Lord anciently. Christ and his apostles were denominated madmen, and Luther and Wesley have been, and still are, by many looked upon in the same light. So long as "the friendship of the world is enmity to God," they who "will live godly in Christ Jesus" shall suffer persecution. At least they need not expect to escape the imputation of enthusiasm. But the answer of Paul, and the true answer for every one in like circumstances, is: "If we be beside ourselves, it is to God; and if we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead," &c.

"The love of Christ doth me constrain
To seek the wandering souls of men.
With cries, entreaties, tears to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave."

We have already seen, that amid the moral desolation which at this time generally pervaded English society, the family of Samuel Wesley, father of John and Charles, existed as an oasis in the desert. It was a fountain of connubial, parental, and filial love, and constantly sent forth the streams of domestic felicity and joy. It was a model family, formed on Christian principles. Its order and happiness arose chiefly from supreme love to God, and reciprocal good-will, respect, and affection. Sons and daughters reared in such a circle, and under such an influence, went forth into society with minds well disciplined, characters well formed and evenly balanced, with virtues strongly guarded, and a resolute sentinel placed at each avenue to the heart, to forbid the approach of every evil. Such a family circle can only be formed and maintained upon the basis of true religion. Such a circle must have been in the mind of the poetess, Mrs. Hale, when she wrote—

"Home is the sphere of harmony and peace,
The spot where angels find a resting-place,
When, bearing blessings, they descend to earth."

From such a home, under the forming power of which he had received a peculiar and indelible stamp of character, Mr. John Wesley had now gone out, and was fairly launched upon the sea of life. In the fullest sense of the word, he had become a man. His mind was of a superior order; his education thorough and finished; his thirst for knowledge unconquerable; his religious principles, as to the fundamentals of Christianity, unalterably fixed; and though, as we shall see hereafter, his *experience* as a Christian was essentially defective, yet his morality was so pure, and his religious habits so strict, that he had already become the object of ridicule and persecution to those of his college associates who were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

From the time Mr. Wesley became again settled at Oxford, in November, 1729, he must be regarded as making a religious profession more strict and marked than he had done before. As there are some interesting facts in this part of

his history, perhaps we cannot present them better than by giving a few extracts from the pages of one of his biographers.

"Hitherto we have viewed Mr. Wesley as the polite collegian, rising into notice and esteem for his literary talents; and in the humble station of curate to his father. In consequence of the order he had received (from Oxford) he now entered upon a new situation: he obtained pupils and became a tutor in the college: he presided in the hall as moderater in the disputations, held six times a week, and had the chief direction of a religious society.

As a tutor he was singularly diligent and careful of his pupils, considering himself responsible for them, not only to their parents and the community, but to God; and therefore labored to make them both scholars and Christians. Some of them disapproved of his religious severities, and refused to join with him in them, but still continued under his care as pupils, and warmly acknowledged their obligations to him. As moderator in the disputations, he acquired a facility and expertness in arguing, especially, as he himself observes, in "discerning and pointing

out well-covered and plausible fallacies," which afterward gave him great superiority over most of his numerous adversaries. But his endeavors to become religious will form the chief subject of this chapter. I call all that he did mere endeavors, because he did not attain the end which he aimed at, peace of mind, comfort in God, and a command over all his passions. He was a long time before he was fully convinced that his own endeavors were insufficient to give him the mind that was in Christ. He clearly saw, in 1725, what the gospel was intended to do for him, and for all mankind: to be the means of reconciling him to God, and giving him a title to the heavenly inheritance; of cleansing him from sin, and preparing him for the enjoyment of heaven: and he retained this view of the general design of the gospel, from that period to the end of his life without the least variation. But he did not yet understand the *method* proposed in the gospel, of putting a sinner in possession of these blessings, nor the order in which the mind is capable of acquiring them. It is true, he read the Scriptures daily, at this time, and in his religious researches, he was "*homo*

unius libri," a man of one book. But his preconceived opinions were as a blind before his mind, and completely hid from his view, the gospel method of attaining present salvation. This is no reproach to Mr. Wesley, nor any objection to the doctrines he afterwards embraced. It is the common lot of all men to imbibe in their youth, notions which afterwards hinder them from perceiving the most obvious truths. It is well known that the systems of natural philosophy, which ingenious men have formed and taught to young students, have been the chief hindrance to the progress of knowledge. What kept his mind in a state of perplexity, was a confused notion of justification: which he either confounded with sanctification, or thought a man must be sanctified before he can be justified. This notion hindered him from perceiving, that to justify in the language of Paul, is to pardon a repenting, believing sinner as an act of grace: not for the sake of any previous holiness in him, but through Jesus Christ alone. As soon as he was convinced of this, he was no longer embarrassed and perplexed; he saw immediately the plan which the gospel proposes of reconciling

sinners to God, of making them holy in heart and life, and giving them a sure hope, full of immortality. But let us attend him through the period appropriated to this chapter, and we shall see the efforts of a great mind to do the will of God; and every step we take, will convince us of the uprightness of his intention.

It appears from the account I have given of Mr. Charles Wesley, that for more than two years before this time he had studied very hard, and through his brother's advice and influence, was become very serious; that during the last summer he had received the sacrament weekly, and had prevailed on two or three young men to do the same; and these gentlemen had occasionally met together for the purpose of assisting and encouraging each other in their duty, and of regulating their employments by certain rules. The regular method of arranging their studies and other employments, procured them the distinguishing epithet of *Methodists*, which, according to Mr. Charles, was given them before his brother came to Oxford in November. This is probably the most accurate account; for when Mr. Wesley speaks of this appellation, he men-

tions it only in general terms, without attempting to state at what period of the society it was given. "The exact regularity of their lives, as well as studies," says he, "occasioned a young gentleman of Christ's Church to say, 'here is a new set of Methodists sprung up,' alluding to some ancient physicians, who were so called. The name was new and quaint; so it took immediately, and the Methodists were known all over the university."

It does not appear, however, that these gentlemen met together at any fixed or stated times, or that they had made any regulations for this purpose before Mr. John Wesley joined them. When he came amongst them they gladly committed the direction of the whole to him; and from this time, the society began to assume a more regular form: it is from this period, therefore, that he commences his history of it, in the following words:

"In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford, Mr. John Wesley, fellow of Lincoln College; Mr. Charles Wesley, student of Christ's Church; Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christ church; and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College;

began to spend some evenings in a week together, in reading chiefly the Greek Testament. The next year two or three of Mr. John Wesley's pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them and afterward one of Mr. Charles Wesley's pupils. It was in 1732, that Mr. Ingham of Queen's College, and Mr. Broughton of Exeter, were added to their number. To these in April, was joined Mr. Clayton of Brazen-Nose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time Mr. James Harvey was permitted to meet with them, and afterwards Mr. Whitefield. These four young gentlemen continued their meetings for some time, without any other views than their own benefit. But in the summer of 1730, Mr. Morgan called at the gaol to see a man who was condemned for killing his wife, and told them, that from a conversation he had with one of the debtors, he verily believed it would do much good if any one would be at the pains of now and then speaking with them. Having mentioned this several times, Mr. Wesley and his brother Charles went with him on the 24th of August to the castle, and were so well satisfied with their visit, that they determined to go

thither once or twice a week. They had not done this long, before Mr. Morgan, who seems to have led the way in acts of charity and benevolence to others, desired Mr. Wesley to go with him to see a poor woman in the town who was sick. When they began to reflect on the benefit this might be of to the poor, they thought it would be well worth while to spend two or three hours in the week in this species of charity, especially if the minister of the parish in which such person was, did not object to it. But as this practice was quite new, and had an appearance of irregularity, on which account it might give offence, Mr. Wesley did not choose to proceed any farther without advice."

Having written for the opinion of his father, who, while he lived, he never failed to consult in respect to any difficult undertaking he had in view, he received a most encouraging letter, which closed as follows:

"Go on, then, in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour has directed you, and that track wherein your father has gone before you! For when I was an undergraduate, I visited those in the castle there, and reflect on it with great

satisfaction to this day. Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully, and my heart and prayers are with you. Your first regular step is to consult with him, if any such there be, who has a jurisdiction over the prisoners; and the next is to obtain the direction and approbation of your Bishop. This is Monday morning, at which time I shall never forget you. Accordingly, to Him who is everywhere, I now heartily commit you."

Having consulted and obtained the approbation of those referred to in the above extract, they supposed themselves secure against any opposition which might otherwise arise. But in this they were mistaken. A mind at "enmity against God" will find methods of expressing its bitterness in spite of human influence or authority. The blameless deportment, and self-denying labors of the Wesleys and their associates, was a standing reproach to the old religious drones, who possessed nothing of Christianity but the name. The gay and sensual felt indignant that their pleasures and amusements should be despised by young men of such extensive attainments and so high reputation. Wit and ridi-

cule, refined and vulgar, and sometimes angry personal invectives were employed to turn them from their purpose. The name Methodist not being thought sufficiently reproachful, it was substituted by "Holy Club," and various arts and plans, not excepting personal violence, were resorted to, to dissolve it.

All this had the effect to dampen the zeal of some members of the society, and turn them aside from that course of Christian duty upon which they had entered. The opposition, encouraged by this success, continued to increase in violence, and for a moment the Wesleys seemed undecided as to the course they should pursue. Again they sought the advice of their excellent father. The following is a portion of his answer:

"This day I received both yours, and this evening, in the course of our reading, I thought I found an answer that would be more proper than any I myself can dictate; though since it will not be easily translated, I send it in the original:

"Πολλή μοι καύχησις ὑπέρ ὑμῶν. πεπλήρωμαι τῇ παρακλήσει. ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ.*

* 2 Corinthians, vii. 4. Great is my glorying of you. I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful.

"What would you be? Would you be angels? I question whether a mortal can arrive to a greater degree of perfection than steadily to do good, and for that very reason steadily and meekly to suffer evil. For my part, on the present view of your actions and designs, my daily prayers are that God would keep you humble; and then I am sure that if you continue to suffer for righteousness' sake, though it be but in a lower degree, the Spirit of God and of glory shall in some good measure rest upon you. And you cannot but feel such a satisfaction in your own minds as you would not part with for all the world. Be never weary of well-doing: never look back, for you know the prize and crown are before you; though I can scarce think so meanly of you, as that you should be discouraged with the crackling of thorns under a pot. . . . He by whom actions and intentions are weighed will both accept, esteem and reward you.

"I hear my son John has the honor of being esteemed Father of the Holy Club; if it be so I am sure I must be the grandfather of it; and I need not say, that I had rather any of my sons

should be so dignified and distinguished, than to have the title of His Holiness."

Encouraged by the approbation and exhortations of their father, and some other men eminent for judgment and piety, the Wesleys and their coadjutors gave themselves with more diligence than ever to the work they had commenced, in visiting the sick, instructing the children of the poor, laboring with the prisoners at the castle, and in many ways displaying the self-denial and benevolence of the gospel of Christ. Many of the destitute and suffering were relieved, many dying sinners were directed to Christ for salvation, and many children who otherwise would have grown up in ignorance and vice, destitute of the first elements of religion, were taught to pray, and instructed in the duty of loving and serving God. A few who commenced with them fell off after a while under the severe persecution which arose against them, but the majority continued, at least as long as the Wesleys were with them,

> "Firm as an iron pillar, strong
> And steadfast as a wall of brass."

Consoled amid the unjust aspersions of their

enemies, by an inward consciousness of rectitude, and supported by the approbation of God and the suffrages of good men, they went steadily forward, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, and animated with the spirit which dictated the following lines of Mr. J Wesley.

"Shall I for fear of feeble man
The Spirit's course in me restrain?
Or undismayed in deed and word,
Be a true witness of my Lord?

Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I
Conceal the word of God most high?
How then before thee shall I dare
To stand, or how thine anger bear?

Yea, let men rage, since thou wilt spread
Thy shadowing wings around my head;
Since in all pain thy tender love
Will still my sure refreshment prove."

Messrs. John and Charles Wesley continued the guiding minds of this literary and religious society during a period of six years. In August 1732, this brotherhood of young men suffered a severe loss in the death of Mr. Morgan, who was one of the most zealous and active members of the society. He was the son of an Irish gentleman, and evidently a person of fine temper and

habits. He was especially dear to the Wesleys, with whom he lived on most confidential and intimate terms. After his death Mr. John Wesley wrote to the father of Mr. Morgan, and expressed the profoundest respect for the memory of his son. Another of the brothers honored the memory of their deceased friend with a poem, from which the following lines may be set down as a specimen, showing the spirit which burned in his heart, and prompted him to improve all opportunities of being useful.

"Gladdening the poor where'er his steps he turned;
Where pined the orphan, or the widow mourned;
Where prisoners sighed beneath guilt's horrid stain,
The worst confinement and the heaviest chain;
Where death's sad shade the uninstructed sight
Veiled with thick darkness in the land of light.
Our Saviour thus fulfilled his great design,
(If human we may liken to divine,)
Healed each disease that bodies frail endure,
And preached the unhoped-for gospel to the poor."

As he lived, so he died; with a joyful conciousness of divine favor, with his eye of faith fixed full and strong on heaven, he passes away.

"Not only unappalled, but joyful, sees
The dark, cold passage that must lead to peace;
Strong with immortal bloom secure to rise,
The tears forever banished from his eyes."

Thus departed this life the *first* Methodist who fell by the javelin of the monster death: exemplifying both in life and death the excellency and power of that faith, and those evangelical principles for which Methodists have ever since been distinguished. May the *last* one who may be visited by the grim messenger, find himself equally well prepared to obey the summons.

Mr. Wesley's father having died in April, 1735, and the living he enjoyed at Epworth having passed into other hands, he considered himself now permanently settled at Oxford, and at liberty to pursue the career on which he had entered there; and he was not without hope of being extensively useful to the Church by promoting an elevated piety among the young men of the university who were preparing for the ministry.

In coming to this conclusion, however, he had forestalled the designs of providence. God had other work for him to do; other conflicts to meet and endure. Besides, he was yet to be taught the pharisaic character of his religion, and led into the true way of salvation by faith in Christ. As salvation by faith was one of the

main truths contended for by Luther in his war with Romanism, so it was to be the distinguishing feature of the reformation under the labors of Wesley. But before he could lead others into the rest of faith, he must know it himself. The reformer must first be reformed.

To show him the sandy nature of his foundation, and bring him to the rock higher than himself, God led him by a way he had not known. There was a pressing call for missionaries to go to the new colony of Georgia, in North America, to preach the gospel to the Indians. The reputation already gained by Mr. Wesley for zeal and piety, pointed him out as a suitable person for a work requiring so much perseverance and self-denial. The trustees of the colony applied. After some hesitation he consented to go, and he was accompanied by his brother Charles, who received ordination with special reference to this service. They embarked October 21st, being accompanied by Mr. Oglethorp, the governor of the colony, and several other gentlemen. They reached their destination on the 6th of February, 1736, and entered immediately upon their work. The Indians for whose benefit the Wesleys had

gone to Georgia, not being accessible, they commenced their labors amongst the white settlers, and found an ample field, though difficult of cultivation. How they employed their time, may be seen by the following extracts from Mr. Wesley's journal.

"As soon as I set foot in Georgia, I began preaching at five in the morning; and every communicant, that is, every serious person in the town, constantly attended throughout the year: I mean, came every morning, winter and summer, unless in the case of sickness. They did so till I left the province. . . . . The English prayers lasted from five till half an hour past six. The Italian, which I read to a few Vaudois, began at nine. The second service of the English, including the sermon and the holy communion, continued from half an hour past ten, till about half an hour past twelve. The French service began at one. At two I catechized the children. About three I began the English service. After this was ended, I had the happiness of joining with as many as my largest room would hold, in reading, prayer, and singing praise. And about six the service of

the Moravians, so-called, began, at which I was glad to be present, not as a teacher, but as a learner."

"These extraordinary labors, and the principles from which they proceeded, were ill appreciated by the great body of the colonists, who hated this incessant application to religious duties, and especially the strict ecclesiastical discipline which the brothers endeavored to establish. Charles, at Frederica, was the innocent victim of a foul conspiracy, by means of which the Governor was for a time deceived, and induced to treat his upright clerical secretary with a harshness and severity which had nearly proved fatal to his life. The wicked plot was afterward unravelled, and the Governor, with expressions of the deepest regret for the course which he had pursued, gave to this persecuted man a ring, accompanied by the strongest declarations of his confidence and affection, and a request that it might be preserved as a perpetual token of his love. At the beginning of August Charles left Georgia, being intrusted with despatches to the trustees in England, and the Governor himself left in November following.

"The situation of John now became increasingly painful. The trustees had appointed him minister of Savannah, but to this appointment he had never consented. He had engaged to go to Georgia only for the purpose of instructing the Indians, and because of the unsettled state of the colony, there appeared no probability that he could fulfil this, the only object of his mission. He therefore began to entertain serious thoughts of following his brother to England. In the meanwhile a prosecution against him was commenced, for having repelled a lady from the holy communion, the particulars of which he has given in his printed journal. He attended the court six or seven times to answer for himself: but finding that his persecutors determined to defer the trial and harass him by delay, he gave public notice of his intended departure, and openly embarked for England in the beginning of December, 1737, having served the colony as a minister, one year and nearly nine months." (*Centenary of Methodism.*)

CHAPTER IV.

His heart was with Jerusalem; and strong
As was a mother's love, and the sweet ties
Religion makes so beautiful at home,
He flung them from him in his eager race,
And sought the broken people of his God,
To preach to them of Jesus!—WILLIS.

His zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,
Or singular and rash.—MILTON.

THE Wesleys are again in England. Having passed through scenes, in their mission to Georgia, unanticipated, and of the most difficult and disagreeable character, they are again in their native land; amid their friends, and on the very spot where they were educated, and had acquired their literary and religious character. And though the opposition and persecutions which arose against them in a foreign land had their origin mainly in an enmity to Bible truth and holiness, yet their zeal was not at all abated, but rather increased by the conflict they had endured. They had failed in the partic-

ular object for which they went to Georgia, and yet their mission was not without its fruit. They had been taught some things which they might not have learned in England. They had received new light respecting the inward life of the Christian, which was of the greatest importance to their happiness and success as Christian ministers, and which subsequently gave character to that extensive work of God promoted by their zeal and labors.

It has already been intimated, that with all their fasting and prayer, their self-denial and benevolence, their labors of love to the guilty, the poor and the needy, and their scrupulous strictness in observing the duties of religion as enjoined by the church, nevertheless their religion was merely legal and pharisaic; they were seeking justification by the deeds of the law, expecting to be saved, not for Christ's sake, but for their works' sake. "Going about to establish their own righteousness," they were, after all, without true religious comfort and joy, because they had not "submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." They had some painful apprehension of their condition before

they left England, but their voyage to America was, under the direction of Providence, the means of fully opening their eyes to their sad state, and of teaching them the "way of God more perfectly."

Divine providence so ordered it, that in their passage to America they had on board several German families of the Moravian faith. Mr. J. Wesley's attention was first arrested by observing their unruffled calmness amid dangers, and their meekness and humility under abuses. "If they were pushed, struck, or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth. There was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well from that of pride, anger, and revenge. In the midst of the Psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and passed in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterward, 'Was you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, no.' 'But were

not your women and children afraid?' 'No; our women and children are not afraid to die.'

"From them I went to their crying, trembling neighbors, and pointed out to them the difference, in the hour of trial between him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not."

Mr. Wesley not only observed a vast difference between these Moravians and the nominal Christians with whom they were surrounded, but he was also conscious of being himself destitute of that moral and religious power which gave them so complete a victory over sin, self, and the fear of death. When danger threatened them, he felt disturbed and unresigned. "At night," says he, "I was waked by the tossing of the ship and roaring of the wind, and plainly showed I was unfit, for I was unwilling to die." On arriving at Savannah, he was introduced to a Mr. Spangenberg, one of the German pastors.

"I soon found," says he, "what spirit he was of, and asked his advice with regard to my own conduct. He said, 'My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are a

child of God?' I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused, and said, 'I know he is the Saviour of the world.' 'True,' replied he, 'but do you know he has saved you?' I answered, 'I hope he has died to save me.' He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do:' but I fear they were vain words."

As Mr. Wesley observed still farther the conduct of these Moravians, and took frequent opportunities of conversing with them and hearing them preach, his conviction continued to increase, that he was essentially deficient in his experience as a Christian: until on his return voyage it seemed to be the one absorbing theme of thought and inquiry. In proof of this, we find the following entry in his journal:

"Sunday, Jan. 8th.—In the fulness of my heart, I wrote the following words:—

"By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced,

1st. Of unbelief: having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart from being

troubled; which it could not be if I believed in God, and rightly believed also in him.

2d. Of pride throughout my life past: inasmuch as I thought I had what I find I have not.

3d. Of gross irresolution: inasmuch as in a storm I cry to God every moment; in a calm, not.

4th. Of levity and luxuriency of spirit, recurring whenever the pressure is taken off, and appearing by my speaking words not tending to edify; but most by my manner of speaking of my enemies. Lord, save, or I perish!"

On the 24th we find him in the same state of mind, only it seems to have increased in intensity, and he breaks out into the following mournful strain:

"I went to America to convert the Indians; but O! who shall convert me? who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself when no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, 'To die is gain.'"

'I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
My last thread I shall perish on the shore!'"

A little after this he remarks again :—

" It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity But what have I learned myself in the mean time ? Why (what I the least of all suspected,' that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."

On landing in England, he repaired again to Oxford, where his brother Charles lay sick, and where he fell in with Peter Bohler, a distinguished German preacher of the Moravian faith. This faithful servant of Christ was, under God, the means of leading the inquiring mind of Mr. Wesley, to a correct and clear apprehension of what justifying faith is, and in the end, indirectly at least, to an experimental acquaintance with what he had sighed and groaned for so long,— that inward peace and joyful assurance of acceptance with God in Christ the beloved, which are the blessed fruit of this faith. He says, " I found my brother at Oxford, recovering from his pleurisy : and with him Peter Bohler ; by whom (in the hand of the great God) I was on Sunday the fifth clearly convinced of unbelief, of the

want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." "Immediately it struck into my mind, 'Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?' I asked Peter Bohler whether he thought I should leave it off or not. He answered, 'By no means.' I asked, 'But what can I preach?' He said, 'Preach faith *till* you have it: and then, *because* you have it, you *will* preach it.'"

This excellent advice was adopted and acted upon by Mr. Wesley without delay. Accordingly the next day he commenced preaching this new doctrine, and for about two months continued to do so, though conscious that his only acquaintance with it was that of theory. Great was his conflict with early prejudices, and habits of thought—with unbelief, with the powers of darkness, and with the displeasure and opposition of friends. Sometimes he seemed just ready to enter into the rest of faith, and then by some powerful and mysterious influence he seemed surrounded with darkness, and removed to a great distance from the object of his pursuit. During most of this time his mind was deeply interested in the subject, and most anxiously en-

gaged for present salvation; but at times he had to contend against a feeling of indifference and languor, which distressed him exceedingly. At length deliverance came; and after such a dark and comfortless season as he had endured it was most welcome and joyful. But we will give it in his own words.

"In the evening (May 24th, 1738) I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in an especial manner despitefully used me, and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. . . . . After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations: but I cried out and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up

my eyes, and He 'sent me help from his holy place.' And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror."

"Monday 29th. I set out for Dummer with Mr. Wolf, one of the first fruits of Peter Bohler's ministry in England. I was much strengthened by the grace of God in him; yet was his state so far above mine, that I was often tempted to doubt whether we had one faith. But without much reasoning about it, I held here: though his be *strong* and mine *weak*, yet that God hath given me some *degree* of faith, I know by its fruits. For I have *constant peace;* not one uneasy thought. And I have *freedom from sin;* not one unholy desire."*

From this time he never lost confidence in his experience, but by habitual prayer and unwearied diligence in the things of God, he went on from "strength to strength," until his faith was strong and steadfast, his "peace like a

* Wesley's Journal.

river, and his righteousness as the waves of the sea."

"His brother Charles was also made partaker of the same grace. They had passed together through the briers and thorns, through the perplexities and shadows of the legal wilderness, and the hour of their deliverance was not far separated. Bohler visited Charles in his sickness at Oxford, but the 'pharisee within' was somewhat offended when the honest German shook his head at learning that his hope of heaven rested on 'his best endeavors.' After his recovery, the reading of Halyburton's life produced in him a sense of his want of that faith which brings 'peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Bohler visited him again in London, and he began seriously to consider the doctrine which he urged upon him. His convictions of his state of danger, as a man unjustified before God, and of his need of the faith whereof cometh salvation, increased, and he spent his whole time in discoursing on these subjects, in prayer, and reading the Scriptures."*

"I am astonished," says he, "that I should

* Watson's Wesley.

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ever think this a new doctrine, especially while our articles and homilies remain unrepealed, and the key of knowledge is not yet taken away." On Whitsunday (May 21st) having read several passages of Scripture bearing on the subject, and after much prayer, "he was enabled to view Christ as set forth to be a propitiation for his sins, through faith in his blood; and he received that peace and rest in God which he had so earnestly sought. The next day he greatly rejoiced in reading the 107th Psalm, so nobly descriptive, he observes, of what God had done for his soul. He had a very humbling view of his own weakness; but was enabled to contemplate Christ in his power to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him."*

In this manner was Mr. Charles Wesley led from a legal Christianity, in which his whole life was an unsuccessful contest with sin and temptation, and his mind filled often with distressing doubts and fears, into the life of faith, the joyful assurance of pardoning love, and to a full realization of what is so forcibly and beauti-

* Whitehead's Life.

fully expressed, and so ardently desired in the following lines from his pen :

"O that I might at once go up;
No more on this side Jordan stop,
But now the land possess;
This moment end my legal years,
Sorrows and sins, and doubts and fears,
A howling wilderness."

Such was the method adopted by Infinite wisdom to lead these excellent men into that spiritual state so necessary to the work to which they were called. Without this faith and its blessed fruits, with all their learning, diligence, self-denial, and conscientiousness, they would have been totally unfit to promote a revival of pure spiritual Christianity, or lead on the sacramental hosts of God's elect. They might have persevered in a conflict with the evils of their own hearts, and the baptized formality and infidelity which pervaded the land, as they actually did for several years at Oxford, before they went to Georgia; but they would have been without religious comfort, and their labors unsuccessful in leading souls to Christ, because unconnected with moral power—the unction of the Holy One.

From this time, therefore, we are to date the real conversion of the Wesleys, as well as the commencement of that glorious revival of vital religion which has saved so many thousands, and filled so many lands with the high praises of God.

"The two brothers were now new men. A sensible application of the blood of Christ to their consciences rendered them cheerful and happy, and produced in their hearts an intense love for the Saviour. Having obtained by the simple exercise of faith in Christ, not only the abiding witness of the pardoning and adopting mercy of God, but also that purity of heart which they had long unsuccessfully endeavored to obtain by works of righteousness and law, they were astonished at their former errors, and longed to make known the great salvation which is thus attainable by all. Before this period, they served God because they feared him; now, they loved him from a joyous assurance that he had first loved them. They confessed that, up to this period, they had been mere servants of God; now they stood in a filial relation to him: and because they were sons, God sent forth the

Spirit of his Son, in their hearts, crying Abba, Father. They had labored with all fidelity to benefit mankind, because they felt this to be their duty; but now the love of God kindled in their breasts a generous, yearning affection for the whole human race, and a willingness even to lay down their lives, if others might only be converted and saved." (*Centenary of Methodism.*)

Having received such large advantage by his intercourse with the pious Moravians, it was very natural that Mr. Wesley should contract a strong affection for them, and seek still farther opportunities of becoming thoroughly acquainted with their doctrines, spirit and discipline. For this purpose he resolved on a voyage to Germany, which he accomplished in June, July, and August. During this period he visited their settlements, made the acquaintance of their principal men, particularly Count Zinzendorf, with whom he had many pleasant and profitable interviews. He spent some time with the Moravian family at Marienborn, which consisted of about ninety members, "joying and beholding their order," and was constrained to say, "O how pleasant

a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

"Here," says he, "I continually met with what I sought for, viz., living proofs of the power of faith; persons saved from inward as well as outward sin, by 'the love of God shed abroad in their hearts;' and from all doubt and fear, by the abiding witness 'of the Holy Ghost given unto them.' He likewise made a thorough examination of their church order and discipline, and found much more to admire than condemn. From this source he doubtless obtained many suggestions which were of great value to him, when subsequently, in the order of providence, he was called to form rules for the government of his societies.

About the beginning of September, Mr. Wesley took leave of his Moravian brethren and returned to England, greatly pleased and profited by his intercourse with them. "I shall easily be excused," says he, "by those who either love or seek the Lord Jesus in sincerity, for speaking so largely of the Moravian Church; a city which ought to be set upon a hill: their light hath been too long hid under a bushel, it is high time

it should at length break forth, and "so shine before men, that others also may glorify their Father which is in heaven."

The Wesleys being now baptized with the spirit of Christ, as well as settled in the doctrines of religion, began the work of saving souls in good earnest. They were like giants refreshed with new wine. They laid aside the form, only so far as it could be employed in promoting the spirit and power of religion. Their improved view of the peace, joy and holiness of the Christian, as attainable by simple faith in Christ, and their own experience agreeing therewith, gave them a more distinct and vivid impression, of the sad, the deplorable state of the Church generally, and of the danger of impenitent sinners. They lifted up the voice like a trumpet—cried aloud and did not spare, they showed the people their transgressions, and "the house of Jacob their sins." For a while, being recently returned from a foreign land, many having a desire to hear them, they were invited to preach, in several Churches in the metropolis and other parts of the kingdom. But as they used extemporaneous prayer, and often preached without notes; and withal used

great earnestness, and plainness of speech; calling the people to immediate repentance and faith in Christ; insisting upon a present salvation—and especially, as the "common people heard them gladly," and flocked to the Churches by thousands: many of them being deeply affected and anxiously inquiring what they must do to be saved—the old dignitaries, and their subordinates and dependants, became alarmed—the cry of heresy was raised against them, and they were excluded first from one and then from another of the Churches, until nearly all were closed against them. Not being allowed to preach in the Churches, what should they do? Thousands were anxious to hear them, and a great and good work had evidently commenced under their ministrations. When they obtained a small room to preach in, it was crowded to suffocation. Necessity was laid upon them to cease preaching, or adopt some other expedient for accommodating the hungry multitudes with the word of life. They remembered that Christ fed five thousand upon the plain, making them sit down upon the grass—that his sermon upon the Mount, and indeed most of his discourses were delivered in the

open air. They considered these precedents sufficient to justify the practice of field-preaching, which seemed now to be their only alternative.

Mr. Whitefield was just returned from America, and being in the same condemnation with themselves, he encouraged them by his example to obey the voice of providence, which evidently designed to thrust them out "into the highways and hedges." But it was not without a struggle, that they overcame their nice views of Church order. "I could," says Mr. J. Wesley, "scarce reconcile myself to this strange way of preaching in the fields, . . . having been all my life so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church." He was enabled, however, to surmount even this difficulty, and on Monday, April 2, 1739, he submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people. This practice, he and his brother Charles, and others who labored with them, continued to the

day of their death, whenever, and wherever circumstances seemed to require it. Often a great multitude flocked to hear them. Mr. J. Wesley speaks of preaching to twenty thousand at a time: "And I cannot say," says he, "I have ever seen a more awful sight than when on Rose Green, or the top of Hannam Mount, some thousands of people were calmly joined together in solemn waiting upon God, while

'They stood, and under open air adored
The God who made both air, earth, heaven and sky.'

And whether they were listening to his Word with attention still as night, or were lifting up their voice in praise as the sound of many waters, many a time have I been constrained to say in my heart, 'How dreadful is this place! This is no other than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven.'" (Journal.)

This mode of procedure, so irregular and disrespectful to church order, in the estimation of those in authority, subjected the Wesleys to much opposition, abuse and violence. Many of the clergy of that day (to their shame be it spoken) were not only destitute of religion, but also of

decency. Sometimes they were active in promoting disturbance, but more frequently did they give their countenance to the violent proceedings of the rabble, beholding with silent approbation, the persecuting measures of the unprincipled and vulgar. As might be expected under such circumstances, these excellent and apostolic men were often obliged to encounter the mob, sometimes led on by the parson, but generally by some one who had obtained a notoriety in the parish for his vulgarity and brutality. The following account of one of these encounters is related by Mr. J. Wesley, in his journal: "Tuesday, Oct. 5, 1739. There was a great expectation at Bath, of what a noted man was to do to me there: and I was much entreated not to preach: because no one knew what might happen. By this report, I also gained a much larger audience, among whom were many of the rich and great. I told them plainly, the Scripture had concluded them all under sin,—high and low, rich and poor, one with another. Many of them seemed to be a little surprised, and were sinking apace into seriousness, when their champion appeared, and coming close to me, asked

by what authority I did these things. I replied, 'By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the (now) Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.'' He said, 'This is contrary to act of Parliament: this is a conventicle.' I answered, 'Sir, the conventicles mentioned in that act (as the preamble shows) are seditious meetings. But this is not such; here is no shadow of sedition: therefore it is not contrary to that act.' He replied, 'I say it is; and beside, your preaching frightens people out of their wits.' 'Sir, did you ever hear me preach?' 'No.' 'How then, can you judge of what you never heard?' 'Sir, by common report.' 'Common report is not enough. Give me leave, sir, to ask, is not your name Nash?' 'My name is Nash.' 'Sir, I dare not judge of you by common report; I think it not enough to judge by' Here he paused awhile, and having recovered himself, said, 'I desire to know what this people comes here for.' On which one replied, 'Sir, leave him to me; let an old woman answer him. You, Mr. Nash, take care of your body; we take care of our souls; and for the

good of our souls we come here.' He replied not a word, but walked away."

Besides this vulgar and brutal opposition raised against the Wesleys in many places, they had to meet difficulties of another kind. Their doctrine was attacked by those high in authority,—particularly the doctrine of justification by faith. In pamphlets industriously circulated, and letters addressed to them personally, they were plied with arguments, which the writers supposed conclusive, against their heretical notions of salvation by faith. That human merit should be thrown aside entirely, and men required to receive salvation as a free gift through Christ, and on no other condition than that of faith, seemed to many so monstrous a dogma, that it was well worth the while to use special pains to prevent its prevalence. Even the prelates of the Establishment thought it not beneath their dignity to raise the cry of alarm. A conversation between Mr. J. Wesley and the Bishop of Bristol on this point has been preserved.

Bishop. "Why, sir, our faith itself is a good work; it is a virtuous temper of mind."

Wesley. "My lord, whatever faith is, our Church asserts, we are justified by faith alone. But how it can be called a good work, I see not: it is the gift of God; and a gift that presupposes nothing in us, but sin and misery."

B. "How, sir! Then you make God a tyrannical being, if he justifies some without any goodness in them preceding, and does not justify all. If these are not justified on account of some moral goodness in them, why are not those justified too?"

W. "Because, my lord, they resist his Spirit; because they will not come to him, that they may have life; because they suffer him not to work in them, both to will and to do. They cannot be saved, because they will not believe."

B. "Sir, what do you mean by faith?"

W. "My lord, by justifying faith, I mean a conviction wrought in a man, by the Holy Ghost, that Christ hath loved *him*, and given himself for *him*, and that through Christ his sins are forgiven."

B. "I believe some good men have this, but not all. But how do you prove this to be the justifying faith taught by our Church?"

W. "My lord, from her Homily on Salvation, where she describes it thus: 'A sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God.'"

B. "Why, sir, this is quite another thing."

W. "My lord, I conceive it to be the very same."

B. "Mr. Wesley, I will deal plainly with you I once thought you and Mr. Whitefield well-meaning men: but I cannot think so now. For I have heard more of you; matters of fact, sir. And Mr. Whitefield says in his Journal, 'There are promises still to be fulfilled in me.' Sir, the pretending to extraordinary revelations, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing."

W. "My lord, for what Mr. Whitefield says, Mr. Whitefield, and not I, is accountable. I pretend to no extraordinary revelations, or gifts of the Holy Ghost; none but what every Christian may receive, and ought to expect, and pray for. But I do not wonder your lordship has heard facts asserted, which, if true, would prove the contrary; nor do I wonder your lordship, believ-

ing them true, should alter the opinion you once had of me. A quarter of an hour I spent with your lordship before, and about an hour now; and perhaps you never conversed one other hour with any one who spoke in my favor: but how many with those who spoke on the other side! so that your lordship could not but think as you do. But pray, my lord, what are those facts you have heard?"

B. "I hear you administer the sacrament in your societies."

W. "I never did yet, and believe I never shall."

B. "I hear too, many people fall into fits in your societies, and that you pray over them."

W. "I do so, my lord, when any show by strong cries and tears that their soul is in deep anguish; I frequently pray to God, to deliver them from it, and our prayer is often heard in that hour."

B. "Very extraordinary indeed! Well, sir, since you ask my advice, I will give it to you very freely. You have no business here. You are not commissioned to preach in this diocese. Therefore, I advise you to go hence."

W. "My lord, my business on earth, is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay so long as I think so. At present, I think I can do most good here, therefore, here I stay.

"As to my preaching here, a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me, and woe is me if I preach not the gospel, wherever I am, in the habitable world. Your lordship knows, being ordained a priest, of the commission I then received. I am a priest of the Church universal; and being ordained as a Fellow of a College, I was not limited to any particular cure, but have an indeterminate commission to preach the word of God, in any part of the Church of England. I do not, therefore, conceive, that in preaching here by this commission, I break any human law. When I am convinced I do, then it will be time to ask, 'Shall I obey God or man?' But if I should be convinced in the meanwhile, that I could advance the glory of God, and the salvation of souls in any other place more than in Bristol; in that hour, by God's help, I go hence, which till then, I may not do."

CHAPTER V.

"The man who rules his spirit," saith the voice
Which cannot err, "is greater than the man
Who takes a city."—MRS. HALE.

See how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace!
Jesus' love the nations fires,
Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.—C. WESLEY.

THE Wesleys, were now fully committed to the cause of Bible truth and holiness. Divine providence had led them along step by step, through dark and intricate passages, and upon the brink of steep precipices, until they had suddenly come forth into pleasant fields, with a plain path before them, illumined as with the light of a sunbeam. They had finally learned by a most happy experience, that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Being exceedingly joyful themselves, they could not do less, in the benevolence of their Christian feelings, than desire most ardently, that others might share the bliss they had proved Besides

this, the view they had of the delinquency of the Church, which, as an extensive valley filled with dry bones, lay spread out before them: as also the perishing condition of multitudes, who were as "sheep without a shepherd," prompted them to activity and zeal, that the former might be raised to a life of piety and usefulness, and the latter be saved from the perdition of the ungodly. For this they labored,

> "To pluck poor souls out of the fire,
> And quench the brands in Jesus' blood."

They believed, and therefore they spoke. Whenever and wherever they could collect a congregation, or have access to an individual, most plainly and frankly, and yet with much affection, did they speak the truths of God's holy word. Their flaming zeal, fervid eloquence, and pathetic and affectionate address, attracted universal attention: and wherever they went, they were listened to by "wondering, weeping, and admiring audiences."

They had now put their hand to the plough, and to look back was, for them, entirely out of the question. There was a time when they might

have contented themselves with saying, "Lord, Lord"—when they might have adjusted themselves nicely to the rules and requirements of a politico-ecclesiastical hierarchy, and in due time have gratified a worldly ambition with the Bishop's mitre, or the honors and emoluments of place and power. But with them, this time had gone by; the "Rubicon was passed," and they were fairly in the field against the corruptions of the world and the marshalled hosts of hell. Christ was their Captain, and HOLINESS their motto. To the sinner their feelings were kind and merciful, but to sin they gave no quarter.

Such faithful and earnest appeals to the congregated multitude, followed by private admonitions and exhortations, could not be otherwise than fruitful. For the gospel is now, as ever, when faithfully preached, "the power of God unto salvation." Many nominal Christians were deeply moved, and sought and obtained the baptism of the Holy Ghost: while sinners by scores and hundreds, made fully aware of their danger, inquired in deep anguish of soul, what they must "do to be saved." These inquirers for salvation needed instruction; and, as a natural

consequence, they would seek it of those who had been instrumental in their awakening. This they did; but as the number of such seekers increased greatly, it became necessary to have special meetings appointed for their benefit, and by consequence, times and places for holding such meetings. And to render such meetings the more useful, as well as to prevent abuses and confusion, it was found important to adopt rules, which, while they served as a guide, or exposition of religious duty, also bound them each to the other, as fellow-helpers in the way to heaven. In this way, without any previous design, but by following the openings of providence, and seeking to provide, as they were in duty bound, for the spiritual wants of those awakened and saved by their preaching, were the Wesleys led to the formation of those "united societies" which subsequently assumed the form of regular churches, and have ever since continued to spread and multiply in Great Britain, the United States of America, and other portions of the Christian world.

Previous to this time, there had been three societies formed, with which the Wesleys had

been directly or indirectly connected; one at Oxford, of which we have already spoken, formed in 1729; another at Savannah, in Georgia, which, during his residence in the colony, met at the house of Mr. J. Wesley; and still another, which was formed May, 1738, at London, and acted principally under the advice and direction of Peter Bohler. But these societies were either dissolved or passed into other hands, and under other influences, and formed no part of those organized bodies whose members were subsequently known as Methodists.

The first permanent society of those awakened and saved by Wesleyan instrumentality, commenced in London in 1739, and the circumstances attending its formation, are thus described by Mr. J. Wesley:—

"In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did one or two more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads.

That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which, from thenceforward, they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. This was the rise of the united society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other than a company of men, having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

The society thus established increased with astonishing rapidity. "Twelve came the first Thursday night; forty the next; soon after a hundred."

Soon, other societies of a similar nature were formed in other places; and as they increased in magnitude as well as number, Mr. Wesley divided the larger ones into smaller companies, denominated classes. One of the most devoted and gifted, was placed over the rest in the character of a leader. It was his duty to promote their growth in grace, by meeting them once a week in class, and inquiring of them how their

souls prospered, praying with them, and giving them such instruction and encouragement as their religious state and circumstances seemed to him to require. If it was not practicable to meet them together thus often, he was to supply the deficiency by visiting them at their homes, inquiring for the reason of their absence, and assisting them to remove or overcome all obstacles to their religious advancement. In case any were delinquent, or irregular in their walk, and would not be reproved, it was the duty of the leader to report them to the preacher having the charge, that they might be dealt with in such manner as the honor and prosperity of the society might demand.

"It can scarcely be conceived," says Mr. Wesley, "what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily experience that Christian fellowship, of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and naturally to care for each other. As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other. And, 'speaking the truth in love,' they grew up

into Him in all things, who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly framed together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, increased unto the edifying of itself in love."

In this way the first effectual step was taken towards maintaining the ground gained in the spiritual warfare in which they were now engaged, and preserving the fruit produced by the divine blessing, from the seed they had so faithfully sown. The sagacious mind of Wesley saw at once, that nothing could be done in the work of rousing the dormant energies of the Church and spreading scriptural holiness on a large scale, without planting societies, and making them centres of moral and religious influence and power. Had the Churches already established received this work as from God, and as laborers, entered into it, and assisted, as they might and should have done, in conducting it to its glorious issues, the necessity of forming separate societies and assemblies would not have existed. But, so far from this, they became the bitterest persecutors of the work, and those engaged in it; not

even manifesting the usual sympathy and charity for those whose only fault was, that they had been reformed and converted to God, under the labors of the Wesleys. The alternatives presented to the mind of Wesley, were, to provide as best he could for the wants of those over whom "the Holy Ghost had made him overseer," or recede, and quit the field ingloriously. He did not, and could not, hesitate as to the course he should pursue. He steadily and firmly followed the openings of Providence. The glorious result abundantly justifies the plan adopted and pursued.

"It was by this means," (the formation of societies,) says Dr. Clarke, "that we have been enabled to establish permanent and holy Churches over the world. Mr. Wesley saw the necessity of this from the beginning. Mr. Whitefield, when he separated from Mr. Wesley, did not follow it. What was the consequence? The fruit of Mr. Whitefield's labors died with himself. Mr. Wesley's fruit remains, grows, increases, and multiplies exceedingly. Did Mr. Whitefield see his error? He did; but not till it was too late. His people, long unused to it, would not come under discipline. Have I authority to say so?

I have; and you shall have it. Forty years ago I travelled in the Bradford, Wilts, circuit, with Mr. John Pool. Himself told me the following anecdote:—Mr. Pool was well known to Mr. Whitefield, and having met him one day, he accosted him in the following manner:—

Whitefield. 'Well, John, art thou still a Wesleyan?'

Pool. 'Yes, sir; and I thank God that I have the privilege of being in connection with him, and one of his preachers.'

Whitefield. 'John, thou art in thy right place; my brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand.'

"And what now remains of this great man's labors? Multitudes were converted under his ministry, and are gone to God, but there is no spiritual succession."

This glorious revival of Bible truth and of holiness, now spread and increased greatly. Societies were formed, not only in London and Bristol, but also in many adjacent places, and

some at considerable distance from the metropolis. Though the laborers were few, yet, believing themselves laboring under the divine sanction, they were zealous and indefatigable, scarcely giving themselves any rest day or night. The effects of their preaching were seen in two ways; in the conversion of hundreds of souls, and in rousing the dead, or "sleeping watchmen of Israel: not indeed to inquire after the truth, and amend their ways, but to crush these irregular proceedings, that they might quietly sleep again. These opponents, however, had more zeal against Methodism than knowledge of it. They attacked it with nothing but idle stories, misrepresentations of facts, and gross falsehoods. They retailed these from the pulpits, and published them from the press, with little regard to *moderation*, *charity*, or even *decency*. This brought more disgrace upon themselves than upon the Methodists, who, finding they were assailed only with such kind of weapons, conceived a higher opinion of the cause in which they were engaged, and profited by the attack. A pious and moderate clergyman, perceiving that such attacks could do no good to their cause, published a few rules to di-

rect the assailants in their future attempts to stop the increasing innovations." (*Whitehead.*)

From these "rules" we extract the following, which will show, indirectly at least, what kind of allegations were urged against the Wesleys and their adherents:

1. "Not to blame persons for doing that now, which Scripture records holy men of old to have practised.

2. "Not to censure men in holy orders for teaching the same doctrines which are taught in the Scriptures, and by our Church.

3. "Not to censure any professed members of our Church, who live good lives, for resorting to religious assemblies in private houses, to perform in society acts of divine worship; when the same seems to have been practised by the primitive Christians.

6. "Not to drive any away from our Church by opprobriously calling them dissenters, or treating them as such, so long as they keep to her communion.

7. "Not lightly to take up with silly stories that may be propagated to the discredit of persons of a general good character."

"Mr Wesley often wished," (says his biographer) ",that they, who either preached or wrote against him, would seriously attend to these rules; but these rules were too candid and liberal for the common herd of opposers. Some attacked him with arguments wretchedly misapplied; others with ridicule, as the more easy way. Mr. Wesley knew in whom he had believed, and in the midst of abuse poured out upon him by friends and enemies, went on his way as if he heard not."

The rapid, the unprecedented increase of converts (apostolic times excepted) under the labors of these faithful servants of Christ, is sufficiently proved by the fact, that within four years from the date of the first society, about two thousand persons were united with them in Christian fellowship, exclusive of all those who had been more or less benefited by their ministry, but had not united with their societies, or did not long remain subject to their control. For the better government of this constantly increasing multitude, and that no one might be continued among them who was not of them, they published the following "general rules." After stating the design of the societies, they say:

"There is one only condition previously required in those who desire admission into these societies, a desire to 'flee from the wrath to come,' to be saved from their sins. But whenever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation:

1. "By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practised; such as,

"The taking the name of God in vain; the profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling; drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, except in cases of extreme necessity; fighting, quarrelling, brawling: brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling; the buying or selling uncustomed goods; the giving or taking things on usury, *i. e.* unlawful interest; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of magistrates or ministers: doing to others as we would not they should

do unto us; doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as,

"The putting on of gold or costly apparel; the taking of such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; the singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God; softness, or needless self-indulgence; laying up treasure upon earth; borrowing without a probability of paying, or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

"It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation:

2. "By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, as far as is possible to all men: to their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting, or helping those that are sick or in prison. To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all they have intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic 'doctrine of devils,' that 'we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.'

"By doing good especially to them who are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in blessings; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only.

"By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed; by running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves and taking up the cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.

"It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation:

"By attending upon all the ordinances of God: Such are, the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures, and fasting or abstinence.

"These are the general rules of our societies: all which we are taught of God to observe in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient

rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know, His Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season. But if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our soul.

JOHN WESLEY.

"May 1, 1743. CHARLES WESLEY."

The influence of that Gospel, which is the "power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth," had now become so extensive, that it was no longer possible for the Wesleys to take the personal oversight of the numerous societies formed, and forming in different parts of the kingdom. The most they could do was to visit them occasionally; preach to them; give them their godly admonitions and advice; and leave them in the care of their leaders. This arrangement did not meet the demands of the case. Subtle and influential enemies took occasion, in

their absence, to sow tares among the wheat; and often, when these faithful pastors returned to visit their flocks, they found them scattered and alienated, or contending among themselves concerning some doctrinal speculation at the expense of Christian charity. But that same wise, gracious, and ever watchful Providence, which at the first led them from a merely formal and pharisaic religion into more consistent views of the plan of salvation, and into the higher life of Christian experience: and, subsequently, when the churches were closed against them, justified and sustained them in the practice of field-preaching; and still later, that the fruits of their labors might not be lost, suggested the idea, and prepared the way for the formation of societies; also directed them in the adoption of measures well suited to the present necessities of the work of God, so gloriously progressing in their hands. By following out these indications of providence, they were led, without any previous design on their part, to employ lay preachers, or unordained men, as helpers in the work of the ministry.

The first thus employed was Thomas Maxwell,

a young man who had been converted under Mr. John Wesley's preaching, at Bristol, May, 1739. He became deeply pious: and prayed, exhorted, and expounded the Scriptures, with uncommon power. Lady Huntington, who knew him well at this period of his life, speaks of him in terms of the highest admiration. He was appointed to assist in the society in London, and there he began to preach. Complaint of this was forwarded to Mr. Wesley, who hastened to London with all speed, to stop the alleged irregularity. His mother then lived in his house adjoining the Foundry. On his arrival, she perceived that his countenance was expressive of dissatisfaction, and inquired the cause. "Thomas Maxwell," said he, abruptly, "has turned preacher, I find." She looked at him attentively, and replied, "John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favoring readily, anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man: for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also, yourself." He took the advice, and (notwithstanding his former preju-

dices) submitted to what he believed to be the order of God." (*Jackson's Centenary.*)

In giving an account of the origin of this kind of preaching under his sanction, Mr. J. Wesley says:—"After a time, a young man, named Thomas Maxwell, came and desired to help me as a son in the gospel. Soon after, came a second, Thomas Richards; and then a third, Thomas Westell. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labor when and where I should direct." (*Journal.*) There is a class of Christians who think the preaching of the gospel a sin, unless it be done according to certain rules of their own making, and which they are pleased to denominate canonical. Had the propriety of Mr. Wesley's course been submitted to their judgment at the time of which we are speaking, of course, a very different policy would have been recommended. Not a sermon would have been preached, except in a church; not a society would have been formed, and no one allowed to call sinners to repentance, until canonically ordained. The consequence would have been, though individual conversions might have occurred, no general revival would have taken place.

Happy for the Christian world that he was governed by another spirit, and adopted more liberal counsels. The fruits are so evident and glorious, that it is not *now* necessary to defend the Wesleys in the instances in which they departed from established usage; but we may put down in his own language, the admirable defence he made at the time, against the attacks of church bigotry, and aristocracy.

"It pleased God," says he, "by two or three ministers of the Church of England, to call many sinners to repentance, who, in several parts, were undeniably turned from a course of sin, to a course of holiness." The ministers of the places where this was done, ought to have received those ministers with open arms; and to have taken those persons who had just begun to serve God, into their particular care; watching over them in tender love, lest they should fall back into the snare of the Devil.

"Instead of this, the greater part spoke of those ministers, as if the devil, not God, had sent them. Some repelled them from the Lord's table; others stirred up the people against them, representing them even in their public discourses,

as fellows not fit to live; papists, heretics, traitors; conspirators against their king and country.

"And how did they watch over the sinners lately reformed? Even as a leopard watcheth over his prey. They drove some of them from the Lord's table; to which till now, they had no desire to approach. They preached all manner of evil concerning them, openly cursing them in the name of the Lord. They turned many out of their work, persuaded others to do so too, and harassed them in all manner of ways.

"The event was, that some were wearied out, and so turned back to their vomit again; and then these good pastors gloried over them, and endeavored to shake others by their example.

"When the ministers by whom God had helped them before, came again to those places, great part of their work was to begin again, if it could be begun again: but the relapsers were often so hardened in sin that no impression could be made upon them.

"What could they do in a case of so extreme necessity, when so many souls lay at stake?

"No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was, to find some one among

themselves who was upright of heart, and of sound judgment in the things of God; and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, in order to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation."

From this statement, which is confirmed as true by all the authentic records within our reach, it appears that the reformation commenced under the Wesleys, could no more have been carried on to the glorious successes which followed, had they been governed by the dictation of the English clergy, than that under Luther could have reached the point it did in rescuing the Church from Romish tyranny and superstition, had that great reformer allowed himself to be governed by the authority of the Pope. There was, in both cases, an ecclesiastical persecution raised against the reformation, and the reformers; in both cases, the success of the reformation depended upon disregarding the stringent regulations of Bishops and Councils: the reformers braved the storm, and came from the contest unscathed. Their achievements have effected the most happy changes and improvements in

the political and religious world; and though the course they adopted, when judged of by the nice rules of church order which then obtained, must be pronounced irregular, yet it was justified by the exigencies of the times: and so long as men are governed by sound sense and true piety, it will meet the approbation of the Christian world.

To the formation of societies, and the employment of pious and talented men to supply them with pastoral labor, one thing more seemed necessary to complete the arrangements, and render the work of God permanent, viz., convenient places for preaching, and holding other meetings of the societies. With very few exceptions, the Methodists had no access to the churches; and though they numbered their thousands in society, besides the multitudes who waited on their ministry, yet their meetings were held in the open air, or in private rooms, until providence opened the way to better accommodations.

"The first chapel that the Wesleys themselves erected was in Bristol; but the first that they opened for divine worship was in London. The history of this place is not a little curious. The chapel was a large, unsightly brick building,

near the present site of Finsbury Square, and was known by the name of the Foundry. It had been in the occupation of the Government, and used for the purpose of casting brass cannon. Its nearness to London rendered it inconvenient, in consequence of the crowds of people that assembled to witness the process; and a serious accident having occurred, by which some lives were lost, and several persons greatly injured, the business was transferred to Woolwich; and the premises were leased to Mr. Wesley, who fitted up the principal building as a place of worship. This chapel was a sort of cathedral in Methodism, until 1777, when it was superseded by the very commodious and elegant chapel in the City Road, which, for many years, was not unfrequently called the New Foundry.

"Behind the old Foundry was Mr. Wesley's dwelling-house, the entrance to which was through the gallery of the chapel. Here Mr. Wesley resided when in London, and here his venerated mother died in the Lord. At one end of the Foundry was a building of one story, which was occupied as a day-school; in another spacious room was a large electrifying machine, which was used on

two days every week, in the case of the afflicted people who resorted thither for relief; and in another, the publications of the two brothers, in prose and verse, were kept on sale. At the top of the Foundry was a small bell, which was rung as the signal of preaching at five o'clock in the morning, and of other religious services. Mr. Wesley had often preached his morning sermon, performed his early devotions with his people, and was on his way to distant places in the country, before other people had shaken off their slumbers, and were prepared to apply themselves to the duties of life.

"The opening of the Foundry in London, and of the 'Room' in Bristol, was soon followed by the Orphan-house in Newcastle, and then by chapels of various dimensions in Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, York, Hull, Birmingham, and other populous towns. In these buildings of primitive Methodism, elegance of architecture was little studied. They were plain and substantial, intended for use, and not for ornament. The most remarkable circumstance connected with them, was their amplitude of accommodation for the poor. . . . . The preaching in these

sanctuaries was plain, pointed, searching, and powerful. The singing was lively; the body of the people generally joined in it: and not a few persons, in different places, were drawn by its sweetness and power to an attendance upon the ministry of the word. The tunes were mostly simple melodies, composed by the old masters, and selected by Mr. Wesley, who published various books of sacred music; and they were sung, if not always according to the rules of art, yet with the spirit and with the understanding. The men and women sat apart in the congregation; a practice which Mr. Wesley derived from the Moravians, but which, even in his time, was found to be inconvenient. It was ultimately abandoned. In these assemblies, which were often annoyed by mischievous and riotous people, multitudes of ungodly persons were awakened, converted, regenerated, sanctified, and built up in faith and love."—(*Jackson's Centenary.*)

CHAPTER VI.

The keen spirit
Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought
Start into instant action, and at once
Plans and performs, resolves and executes!—HANNAH MORE.

More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail!
Sin's strong holds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.—C. WESLEY.

HAVING brought this sketch of the lives and labors of the Wesleys, and of the progress of that remarkable work of God, which under his providence, owed its existence chiefly to their agency, to a point where it assumes a regular and permanent form, we shall, in what remains, give less attention to the detail of circumstances. In the progress of events, as connected with this great revival, we have seen these servants of God excluded from the churches, preaching in the fields, forming societies, employing lay preachers to supply the place of regular pastors, in watching over the souls God had given them

We have seen the people converted by hundreds, societies multiplied by scores, and commodious places of worship provided, for the permanent ministry of the word.

To supply these societies with stated preaching, Mr. Wesley formed them into what was denominated *circuits*. Each circuit embraced as many places of worship as two, or three preachers could visit within a given time, they following each other at specified periods in making the tour of the circuits. As they were employed by Mr. Wesley, they were appointed to their work by his authority, and labored only when and where he chose to direct. Those who preached in connection with him, agreed unqualifiedly, to submit to his direction, and spend their time and efforts, as he should think most for the glory of God. This arrangement was necessary to give unity and efficiency to their operations, and to prevent confusion, and a conflict of interests. In this manner, commenced that plan of ministerial labor, denominated the itinerancy, which has been maintained by the whole Methodist Connection in Europe and America, from that day to this, and which has been found so admi-

rably adapted to extend the gospel among the poor

While Mr. Wesley required his preachers to come under this system, and be guided by his judgment as to the manner in which they spent their time and bestowed their labor, he in connection with his brother Charles, took the whole field as his parish. He was "*individuum vagum.*" He travelled from place to place, visiting the societies, in their respective localities; going, not only "where he was wanted, but where he was wanted most." He became as nearly omnipresent as is possible for a human being. As the skilful and vigilant general keeps his eye upon every department of his army during an engagement, and is ready to strengthen the weak points by bringing fresh troops to their assistance; and by his presence and voice inspires them with courage to endure the fierceness of the battle; so he passed from point to point throughout the whole field of spiritual toil. His voice was heard in the thickest of the fight; he "reproved, rebuked, and exhorted with all long-suffering and doctrine," and perpetually held himself in readiness for any emergency.

Now, he was seen in the societies, mingling with the poor people, reconciling their differences, instructing their ignorance, and strengthening their purposes to reform and lead holy and useful lives; now, in the midst of thousands of every variety of character, imitating his divine Master in preaching a pure and free gospel, with a stone for his pulpit, and the heavens for his sounding-board; and anon stopping to answer the specious objections of some caviller, or to measure swords with some sturdy skeptic, or theological champion, whose ire had been roused by the simplicity and power with which he enforced those heart-searching and essential truths, which in that corrupt and time-serving age had become almost obsolete. From four o'clock in the morning, until nine at night, his mind was ever active; and excepting the time spent in travelling, his tongue or pen was always employed in communicating truth concerning the great salvation. And his industry and perseverance were fully equalled by his success.

In a system like that established by the Wesleys, everything depended upon mutual confidence and unity. There must be unanimity of

sentiment as well as of action. There must be no collision of parts. All the members must be so adjusted to each other that the system will work smoothly, or it cannot work successfully. Mr. Wesley must know his preachers, and his preachers must know him; and there must be harmony of action arising from union of views, and mutual confidence.

To secure and maintain this desirable state of things, it was necessary that the Wesleys and their preachers, should have frequent and familiar intercourse with each other. In order to this they established those periodical meetings called conferences. These conferences were at first, nothing more than a familiar interchange of thought respecting doctrines and discipline, with the view of preserving the harmony and efficiency of the body. As the work enlarged and the number of preachers increased, the conferences assumed more of a business character, and with the increase of methodistic publications it became less necessary to use the time of these meetings in the discussion of theological subjects. The first conference commenced in London, June 25th, 1744, and continued five days; and in the

language of Wesley himself, the time was spent in "seriously considering, by what means we might the most effectually save our own souls, and them that heard us. And the result of our consultations we set down, to be the rule of *our future practice.*" The Conference of English Methodist preachers, has been held annually ever since; and Mr. Wesley presided in forty-seven such meetings, before he died. The subjects of their deliberations were proposed in the form of questions, which were amply discussed; and the questions with the answers agreed upon were written down, and afterwards printed, under the title of "Minutes of several conversations between the Reverend Mr. Wesley and others;" commonly called "Minutes of Conference." As the work of reformation was constantly increasing in extension and influence, new societies being formed, and the demands for ministerial labor multiplying; and as there were numerous applications to enter the connection as travelling preachers, it became necessary to consider the subject of a call to the ministry, and fix upon the standard of qualification for admission to tha work. The views entertained on this subject,

and which governed, in deciding who should be employed, are put down in the following questions and answers.

"*Q.* How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and called of God to preach?

"*A.* Inquire, 1st. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

"2d. Have they the *gifts* (as well as *grace*) for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

"3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

"As long as these three marks concur in any, we believe he is called of God to preach."

Such were the men employed as helpers in the work of the ministry. They were men to be trusted; men who had not taken up the business

of preaching for a morsel of bread, or to gain worldly distinction of any kind. The "love of Christ constrained" them, and they entered upon their work not knowing what was reserved for them in the future of this world, save that their observation and experience had taught them not to be surprised should they meet bitter persecution, imprisonment, and death. As a general thing, they were deficient in the learning of the schools, but they were familiar with the word of God, and some of them attained to great eminence in biblical literature.

A band of such men, inspired with the love of Christ, and held to each other by the strongest ties, and most powerful motives that can act upon the human mind, under the leadership of those distinguished servants of Christ, John and Charles Wesley, could not fail to leave their mark wherever they came. They explored every part of the kingdom; thousands of the most hardened were converted from the multitudes who flocked to hear them,

> "While those who came to mock,
> Remained to pray."

Methodism was now fairly wrought into a system, every part of which seems to have been suggested providentially, by the wants of the societies, to aid the work of God, and preserve the fruits of evangelical preaching. At several of the subsequent conferences, the ground they had passed over was reviewed, their doctrines and discipline subjected to fresh scrutiny, defects were remedied, excrescences and incongruities were removed; until, at the conference of 1770, the whole plan, embracing faith, Church order, and ecclesiastical polity, was settled and fixed, and has remained substantially the same from that to the present period.

The work of revival was now in rapid progress. It had acquired such momentum, that it pressed through all difficulties, and bid defiance to all attempts made to arrest it. The openly expressed displeasure of prelates—the more undignified opposition of the inferior clergy—the scoffs and sarcasms of infidels—and the brutal violence of mobs, encouraged by those in authority, were alike powerless before the triumphs of evangelical truth and holiness. The word of God ran and was glorified, achieving the most splendid

victories over contemptible prejudice, hateful bigotry, and the worst forms of human depravity.

The incidents and circumstances which had hitherto marked the progress of the Wesleyan Reformation, and which in the preceding pages have been set down with considerable particularity, continued to occur, without much variation, during the first thirty years of its history. To name them in the order of occurrence, would be to form a continuous detail of sermons delivered to listening multitudes in the open air; sinners inquiring with tears what they should do to be saved; thousands happily converted to Christ; new societies formed, and old ones improved; abuses and persecutions endured for the sake of Christ and souls; attacks by enemies, and defences by friends; and numerous providential interferences in behalf of the cause of truth and righteousness, and its God-favored agents; all of which has, at least upon a small scale, passed in review before us. There are, nevertheless, a few things within this period which justify farther illustration.

The Gospel is decidedly aggressive in its spirit and design. It neither despises the day of small

things, nor is satisfied with small attainments. Those blessed by its influence become at once anxious to bless others. Every truly converted person becomes a witness for God, and a laborer in His vineyard. He is a soldier, enlisted in a warfare which is to terminate only with his natural life; and in which, victory confers the highest good upon the vanquished, while it augments the reward of the victor. The Captain leads his hosts only against sin and error; he conquers only to save: and having conquered, on his lips hangs the law of kindness.

The rapidity with which the Gospel spread, under the labors of the Wesleys and their preachers, producing its appropriate fruits wherever it came, has no parallel, except in apostolic times; and there is, in several respects, a striking parallel between the two cases. Both reformations were blessed with a remarkable display of Divine power in connection with the preached Gospel, producing effects unusual in ordinary times upon the minds of the people. Both were aided in their extension by the quenchless zeal and steady perseverance of the principal agents, as also the personal activity of the converts. Both were

persecuted by secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries, and in both cases, those persecuted went everywhere preaching the word, the Lord confirming the truth with signs following.

Not only did Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors extend their visits to every part of the British isle, and preach and establish societies among thousands who had never before heard a gospel sermon, but they also embraced Ireland and Scotland in their benevolent designs. Mr. Wesley had contemplated visiting Scotland at an early period of the Reformation, but he was prevented from doing so, partly by his numerous and pressing duties in England, and partly by the advice of friends, and an unwillingness to come in contact with the influence of Mr. Whitefield, who had separated from him on the doctrine of Calvinistic Election and Reprobation, and had preceded him in Scotland. In 1761, he executed his design respecting his northern tour, and penetrated Scotland as far as Aberdeen. He was favorably received, and had the satisfaction of seeing the good cause advancing in that region.

"Next to their own country, the sympathies

of the brothers were awakened in behalf of Ireland, where protestantism had fallen into a profound sleep, under the shade of the civic power; and popery, ever watchful and active for the attainment of its own worldly and selfish ends, was rapidly leading the body of the population into superstition and sin. After visiting the principal counties in England, Mr. John Wesley went to Ireland in the year 1747, as a preacher of righteousness, where he met at once, with formidable opposition, and encouraging success He was immediately followed by his brother, who preached with equal zeal and power in several of the most important towns, unmoved by the Romish mobs, some of which seemed determined to shed his blood. Some of his escapes were almost miraculous. After patient perseverance their object was gained. Preachers were stationed in several of the principal towns; circuits and societies were formed; a standard was raised against the farther encroachments of anti-Christian error; many thousands of nominal Christians became the spiritual worshippers of God; and not a few of the deluded Romanists were not only taught to distinguish between the

religion of Christ and the commandments of men, but believed in the Lord Jesus to the saving of the soul." (*Jackson's Centenary.*)

The expansive and diffusive spirit of the Wesleyan revival, could no longer be confined to the United Kingdom. In 1765 or 1766, it found its way to America. Philip Embury, and several other German and Irish emigrants, having settled in the city of New York, established the first society of Methodists upon the American continent. Before his emigration to this country, Mr. Embury was employed by Mr. Wesley as a local preacher, and as such he labored acceptably and usefully in his adopted country. The first sermon in America, was preached in his own house to only five emigrant Methodists. Soon the number of hearers increased, sinners were awakened and converted, and a society organized. Needing better accommodations, they hired a room near the military barracks, which had been used as a sail loft. Captain Webb, a military officer, and a local preacher in connection with Mr. Wesley, who had been ordered to America, and appointed barrack-master at Albany, found out this infant society, and rendered them much aid

by his preaching and influence. They continued to worship in this room for a year or more, when their numbers being much increased, and the place too strait for them, they resolved to build a house for the Lord. For this purpose they purchased grounds in John-street, and forthwith commenced the work. But being mostly poor, they felt the need of more pecuniary means than they could command. In their extremity, they applied to Mr. Wesley for money and preachers, to aid in building up the cause of Methodism. The following entry in Mr. Wesley's journal, will show what kind of response was given to this Macedonian cry.

"Tuesday, August 1, 1769. Our Conference began at Leeds On Thursday I mentioned the case of our brethren at New York. For some years past, several of our brethren from England and Ireland (and some of them preachers) had settled in North America, and had in various places formed societies, particularly in Philadelphia and New York. The society of New York had lately built a commodious preaching house; and now desired our help, being in great want of money, but much more of preachers. Two

of our preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore, willingly offered themselves for the service, by whom we determined to send over fifty pounds as a token of our brotherly love."

These brethren embarked for America without delay, and after an unpleasant voyage of nine weeks' duration, arrived safely at Philadelphia, Mr. Pilmore remained at Philadelphia, while Mr. Boardman proceeded to New York. He was received with great cordiality, and the fifty pounds sent over by the English Methodists proved a most seasonable relief. Such was the commencement of American Methodism. Other preachers soon followed the example of Pilmore and Boardman, in giving themselves to the cause of God in America. They extended their travels into Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the interior of New York; and so successful were they in that work to which they devoted all their energies, that when the American revolution commenced (in 1776), there were twenty-two preachers, most of them Americans, and about three thousand members united in the societies they had formed.

The Wesleys, as well as the work in which

they were engaged, continued to be hated and persecuted. The persecuting spirit did not always show itself in the same way, yet it gave decided proof of its existence. As the revival spread, multiplying its subjects by thousands, and numbering among them many respectable and influential persons, that violent and vulgar opposition which had often shown itself in the blind fury of the mob, became less frequent. But the feeling that prompted it still existed, and sometimes found vent through channels that were deemed respectable. To personal violence, by physical force, succeeded violent attacks through the press, upon personal character, and upon the doctrines they taught. At one time, a very popular slander was, that they were papists; but the persecutions they suffered in Ireland, at the hands of the Romanists, robbed their enemies of this weapon, or at least made them ashamed to use it. At another time it was currently reported that they were in league with the Pretender, and laboring to overthrow the government. Every variety of wicked and cruel slander that malice and ingenuity could invent, was eagerly caught up and circulated to bring them and the

reformation into disrepute. The agents in this malignant business were in spirit and design, identical with those who said to Christ, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil," and finally crucified him on a charge of treason against Cæsar.

A persecution of a different kind, as to its agents, and the manner of conducting it, and aimed more particularly at the doctrines of the Wesleyan reformation, commenced in 1770, and led to the famous controversy between Fletcher and several distinguished and talented writers on the disputed points between *Calvinism* and *Arminianism.*

The way had been prepared for this controversy, by the great talent and influence of Mr. Whitefield, who had embraced the Calvinistic theology, and made it the occasion of a separation from the Wesleys. He had been to America, and preached throughout the country with much success—being received with great favor by the Calvinistic Churches; and with his faith respecting particular election, greatly strengthened by communion with American Calvinists, he returned to renew his career of usefulness in his native

land. Finding the Wesleys preached general redemption, and the possible salvation of all, he entirely separated from them, and preached and wrote against them. "Having heard much," says Mr. J. Wesley, "of Mr. Whitefield's unkind behavior since his return from Georgia, I went to him to hear him speak for himself, that I might know how to judge. I much approved of his plainness of speech. He told me he and I preached two different gospels, and therefore, he not only would not join with, or give me the right hand of fellowship, but was resolved, publicly, to preach against me and my brother, wheresoever he preached at all. Mr. Hall (who went with me) put him in mind of the promise he had made but a few days before, that, whatever his private opinion was, he would never, publicly, preach against us. He said that promise was only the effect of human weakness, and he was now of another mind." (*Journal.*) It is true, the breach thus occasioned was afterwards healed, so far as to restore personal friendship and Christian fellowship, yet the discordant doctrinal views held and preached by them, were never reconciled. Mr. Whitefield continued the

advocate of particular election and partial redemption,—while the Wesleys proclaimed wherever they came, respecting the amplitude of the atonement and its application to the wants of the world,—

> "Its streams the whole creation reach,
> So plenteous is the store;
> Enough for all, enough for each,
> Enough forever more."

Subsequent to this period Mr. Whitefield preached with considerable success in England and Scotland. In Scotland where the dissenting Churches were numerous, and strongly imbued with Calvinism, the people soon dropped their prejudices against him on account of his being a churchman, and received him with much favor in consideration of the zeal and energy with which he asserted the sterner features of the Calvinian creed. In England, being a churchman by education and ordination, and having published his separation from the Wesleys, his influence was considerable with the evangelical clergy of the establishment, who were generally the advocates of unconditional election and reprobation. Moreover, as he had broken away from the formality of the national Church, and

therefore sympathized in many particulars with the dissenters generally, he had little difficulty in gaining access to them. Being a man of remarkable eloquence, and extraordinary pathos, he was followed by multitudes, and his preaching made a decided, often a lasting impression. But as he was instrumental in rousing the dead and lukewarm among clergy and laity, to new life and increased zeal and activity, he was equally successful in forming their creed in harmony with his own, or giving a more decided sternness and inflexibility, to their previously entertained notions of the divine decrees. Many persons of distinction among both clergy and laity became the patrons of Mr. Whitefield and his theology

In the meantime the Wesleys were magnifying their office as reformers. They committed their cause to God, and went forward without any misgiving. Having nothing incongruous in their creed, to embarrass them in offering Christ to the sinners, or to cause hesitancy in the minds of their hearers, in receiving Christ as *their* Saviour, their success was marked and uniform. If Mr Whitefield numbered his converts by hundreds

the Wesleys numbered theirs by thousands. If the followers of Whitefield were tenacious of the premises of the Geneva Reformer, and the deductions of Geneva logic, the adherents of the Wesleys were equally zealous for the doctrine of universal redemption; and, as in duty bound, hated those dogmas which sought to exalt the divine sovereignty at the expense of his benevolence and impartiality, and excluded the greater portion of a race equally guilty, and equally needy, from the possibility of salvation through an atoning Redeemer. In this way, while on one hand the doctrines of free grace were rapidly extending, and opening channels of mercy to many dark and depraved minds, on the other, the elements of a formidable opposition were being created, systematized, and brought into active agency. There was sufficient hostility to Arminianism in existence, and the agents and appliances for a general and systematic attack had been in readiness for several years; but a fitting occasion, or pretext for commencing the engagement was, as yet, a desideratum. This pretext was supposed to be given by the publication of the minutes of the Conference of 1770.

In these minutes Mr. Wesley published the conversations which took place in the Conference, wherein they state and explain the particulars in which they had "leaned too much towards Calvinism." Certain expressions relative to *faithfulness*, and moral *desert* or *merit*, occurring therein, the meaning of which were strangely misapprehended, gave great offence to the leading Calvinists of that day. Forthwith, the tocsin of war was sounded, and, as far as the agents could effect it, the kingdom was in a blaze. The ordinary methods of polemical warfare were not deemed sufficiently dignified, imposing, and effective, for the occasion which now called to arms. The offence was a public one, and committed by a large body of ministers. It was proper that a public and organized demonstration should be made against it. The clergy of all denominations not infected with this "dreadful heresy," should unite in a body to arrest the course of this spiritual Vandalism, which threatens to overspread the kingdom, and bury the religious improvements of ages in one common ruin.

To meet the imperative demands of so extra-

ordinary an emergency, the Honorable and Rev erend Walter Shirley, a leading Calvinist, and a man of rare attainments and great influence in his religious associations, issued the following "circular letter," to be placed in the hands of those whose influence and co-operation he desired:

"SIR,—Whereas Mr. Wesley's Conference is to be held at Bristol, on Tuesday, the 6th of August next, it is proposed by Lady Huntingdon, and many other Christian friends (real Protestants), to have a meeting at Bristol, at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapprove of the underwritten Minutes; and as the same are thought injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, it is farther proposed that they go in a body to the said Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said Minutes; and in case of a refusal, that they sign and publish their protest against them. Your presence, sir, on this occasion, is particularly requested. But if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject to such persons as you think proper

to produce them. It is submitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a dreadful heresy, to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the dissenters as of the Established Church, as you can prevail on, to be there, the cause being of so public a nature.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"WALTER SHIRLEY."

The circulation of this letter through the three kingdoms, coming from so respectable a source, and having the approbation of many other influential persons, had its designed effect, even before the time appointed for the convocation. Mr. Wesley was denounced by persecuting bigots as a "*Papist unmasked, a heretic, an apostate.*" Doggerels were composed and published, setting forth his apostasy. Great were the shoutings, "*And now that he lieth, let him rise up no more!*"

Let us now look in upon Mr. J. Wesley, as he was "sitting quietly in his study on the other side of St. George's Channel," when the "trumpet of Mr. Shirley gave the alarm." For a moment he may have been a little discomposed by

this onslaught, as unjust as it was sudden and unexpected. But almost instantly his mind regains its usual calmness, with, perhaps, more than its wonted firmness. He takes his pen and writes the following words, which strongly resemble some of those outbursts of the noble and fearless soul of Martin Luther, when he learned the existence of some new opposition or combination against the Reformation; though the words of Wesley are not marked by the rashness which often appeared in the language of Luther.

(1.) "I believe no decree of reprobation, I do not believe the Father of spirits ever consigned one unborn soul to hell, or damned him from his mother's womb.

(2.) "I believe no decree of preterition, which is only reprobation whitewashed. I do not believe God ever sent one man into the world, to whom he had decreed never to give that grace whereby alone he *could* escape damnation.

(3.) "I do not believe any such absolute election, as implies that all but the absolutely elect shall inevitably be damned.

(4.) "I do not believe the doctrine of irresistible grace, or infallible perseverance; because

both the one and the other, implies *that* election, which cannot stand without preterition, or reprobation.

(5.) "I do not believe in salvation by works. Yet, if any man can prove (what I judge none ever did, nor ever will) that there is no medium between this and absolute predestination; I will rather subscribe to this than to that, as far less absurd of the two."

"*Hinc illæ lachrymæ?* Here is the source of Mr. H.'s (Rowland Hill's) implacable hatred to me. And hence arises his vehement displeasure at those Minutes, which Mr. Shirley and he style "*dreadful heresy.*" For many years, from a well-meant but ill-judged tenderness, we have suffered the reprobation preachers (vulgarly called *gospel preachers*) to spread their poison almost without opposition. But at length they have awakened us out of sleep: Mr. H. has answered for all his brethren, roundly declaring that "any agreement with election doubters, is a covenant with death." It is well: we are now forewarned, and forearmed. We look for neither peace nor truce with any who do not openly and expressly renounce this diabolical sentiment. But since

God is on our side, we will not fear what man can do unto us. We never before saw our way clear to do more than act on the defensive. But since the circular letter has sounded the alarm, has called forth all their hosts to war; and since Mr. H. has answered the call, drawing the sword and throwing away the scabbard; what remains, but to own the hand of God, and make a virtue of necessity? - I will no more desire any Arminian, so called, to remain only on the defensive. Rather chase the fiend, Reprobation, to his own hell, and every doctrine connected with it. Let none pity or spare one limb of either speculative or practical Antinomianism."

The gathering of "real Protestants" invoked by the circular letter of Mr. Shirley, to give a public demonstration against the "dreadful heresy," did not amount to as much as was anticipated by those concerned in getting it up. The convocation took place at the time specified, but was far from being formidable.

They entered the Conference as they had proposed to do, but with a subdued and modified tone and bearing. Mr. J. Wesley, who was president of the Conference, received them cour-

teously; and after mutual conversations and explanations, which continued about two hours, in which Mr. Shirley and those with him acknowledged that "the circular was too hastily drawn up, and improperly expressed; and therefore, for the offensive expressions contained in it," say they, "we desire we may be hereby understood to make every suitable submission:" and Mr. Wesley admitted some expressions in the Minutes were "not sufficiently guarded:" it was agreed by Mr. Shirley, that instead of a "formal recantation" of the "dreadful heresy," they would be satisfied with a declaration from Mr. Wesley and his preachers, that they neither believed nor taught "justification by works;" and in which they also say, "We have no trust or confidence but in the alone *merits* of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgment." This declaration being made and signed by Mr. Wesley and fifty-three of his preachers, Mr. Shirley placed at the disposal of the president the following card:—

"Mr. Shirley's Christian respects wait on Mr. Wesley. The declaration agreed to in Confer-

ence, the 8th of August, 1771, has convinced Mr. Shirley he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points in the minutes of the Conference held in London, August 7th, 1770: and he wishes hereby to testify the full satisfaction he has in the said declaration, and his hearty concurrence and agreement with the same. Mr. Wesley is at full liberty to make what use he pleases of this.—*August* 10*th*, 1771."

Thus ended this *public* demonstration of Calvinistic ministers against Arminian heresy, as put forth in the "minutes" of the Conference,—rather a tame issue to an affair which had so pompous a beginning.

The effects produced by the circular of Mr. Shirley, in the religious circles of the country generally, were not so easily disposed of. Conscientious, pious, talented divines found themselves compelled to take sides, for or against the doctrines condemned, and this necessarily led to more or less collision and controversy. From the points objected to in the "minutes," the discussion extended to collateral subjects. The lion of controversy had been roused, and he only growled the more fiercely as attempts were made

to tame him into submission. He refused to lie down again in his lair, until every point of difference between *partial* redemption and the *unconditional* election and reprobation of Calvin, and the *general* redemption and *conditional* election and reprobation of Arminius, had been thoroughly scanned.

In opposition to universal redemption and free salvation, such men as Shirley, Toplady, Rowland Hill, and Richard, his brother, employed all their talent and influence. Rhetoric, logic, sarcasm, and personal abuse, were brought into requisition, as these champions found themselves involved by the absurdities of their theory, and the arguments of their opponents.

On the other hand, Mr. Wesley intrusted the conduct of the discussion almost entirely to Mr. Fletcher, who became to him what Melancthon was to Luther, the distinguished expounder and defender of the doctrines of the Reformation. In reviewing the history of that contest with the powers of Rome, it is difficult to see how Luther could have dispensed with the services of Melancthon. The rashness of one was tempered by the mild and gentle disposition of the other. The

impetuous and fiery spirit of Luther prepared him for the bold strokes of a Reformer, but unfitted him for the calm judgment and patient investigation essential to successful controversy. Luther was the Reformer, Melancthon the Theologian of the 16th century.

Though Wesley was, constitutionally and educationally, better fitted for the contests of polemical divinity than Luther, yet his numerous, pressing, and constantly increasing duties as the head pastor of a large and rapidly growing religious community, left him no spare time to devote to such a work. It was, therefore, not only opportune, but he ever considered it providential, that Mr. Fletcher appeared as he did, to take the management of the controversy so unexpectedly forced upon them, and conduct it to a successful termination.

Fletcher was a Frenchman, of finished education and accomplished manners. He was born at Nyon, in Switzerland, 1729, and educated at the University of Geneva. Having visited England, he became tutor to the two sons of Thomas Hill, Esquire, of Shropshire, and was converted when about twenty-five years old. The account

he gives of his first acquaintance with the adherents of Mr. Wesley is as follows: "While tutor, he accompanied the family of Mr. Hill to London. As he was not to be found when they were ready to return, they started without him. A horse being left for him, he rode after them, and overtook them in the evening. Mr. Hill asked him why he stayed behind. He said, 'As I was walking, I met with a poor old woman, who talked so sweetly of Jesus Christ, that I knew not how the time passed away.' 'I shall wonder,' said Mrs. Hill, 'if our tutor does not turn Methodist by-and-by.' 'Methodist, Madam,' said he, 'pray, what is that?' She replied, 'Why, the Methodists are a people that do nothing but pray; they are praying all day and all night.' 'Are they?' said he: 'then by the help of God, I will find them out, if they be above ground.'"

He did find them out not long after, and was admitted a member of the society. He was admitted to the ministry by ordination at Whitehall, in 1757, being then twenty-eight years of age. In 1760, he was settled over the parish of Madely, where he exercised his ministry to

the day of his death, a period of twenty-five years. During this whole period,

> "Grace was in all his steps, heaven in his eye,
> In all his gestures sanctity and love."

From their first acquaintance, the friendship between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, was most sacred and intimate; and at the time of this systematic attack upon the doctrines of the Wesleyan reformation, had continued about sixteen years.

In distributing his circular, Mr. Shirley sent a copy of it to Mr. Fletcher, by which he invited him to be present and assist in the public demonstration to be made against the "dreadful heresy" therein referred to. This Mr. Fletcher could no more do, than he could renounce Christ, and turn Turk or Infidel. Moreover, he did not feel at liberty to remain silent. He saw the reputation of his old, long-tried friend in danger, and also, that a combination was formed against that blessed truth which he had advocated so many years, and which was dearer to him than life. Without conferring with flesh and blood, he takes his pen, and writes the following words to Mr. Shirley:

"HONORED AND REVEREND SIR:—Before a judge passes sentence upon a person accused of theft, he hears what his neighbors have to say for his character. Mr. Wesley, I grant, is accused of what is worse than theft, *dreadful heresy;* and I know, that whosoever maintains dreadful heresy, is a *dreadful heretic;* and that the Church of Rome shows no mercy to such. But may not real protestants indulge with the privilege of a felon, one whom they so lately respected as a brother. And may not I, an old friend and acquaintance of his, be permitted to speak a word in his favor, before he is branded in the forehead, as he has already been on the back.

"This step, I fear, will cost me my reputation (if I have any) and involve me in the same condemnation with him whose cause, together with that of truth, I design to plead. But when humanity prompts, when gratitude calls, when friendship excites, when reason invites, when justice demands, when truth requires, and conscience summons, he does not deserve the name of a Christian friend, who, for any consideration, hesitates to vindicate what he esteems truth, and to stand by an aggrieved friend, brother, and

father. Were I not, sir, on such an occasion as this, to step out of my beloved obscurity, you might deservedly reproach me as a *dastardly wretch;* nay, you have already done it in general terms, in your excellent sermon on the fear of man. 'How often,' say you, 'do men sneakingly forsake their friends, instead of gloriously supporting them against a powerful adversary, even where their cause is just, for reasons hastily prudential, for fear of giving umbrage to a superior party or interest.' "

This controversy, commenced with so much spirit on both sides, was continued without intermission through several years. The opponents of Mr. Fletcher, being plied with arguments, and pressed with logical and theological difficulties on every hand, were not able to preserve their temper. They charged him with "calumny, forgeries, vile slanders, acrimonious sneers, and horrid misrepresentations." They complained that he had exhibited their venerated doctrines in such a light as to excite mirth and pity. But his answer was, "How can I help it? If a painter who knows not how to flatter, draws to the life an object excessively

ridiculous in itself, must it not appear excessively ridiculous in his picture? Is it right to exclaim against his pencil as *malicious*, and his colors as *unfair*, because he impartially uses them according to the rules of his art? And can any unprejudiced person expect that he should draw the picture of the night without using any black shades at all?"

In this discussion Mr. Fletcher astonished both his friends and his enemies. He proved himself a classical scholar, deeply read in the philosophy of the schools—as familiar with the Scriptures as with the alphabet—extensively acquainted with history and biblical literature—a master in logic, and remarkably happy in the choice and use of figures, with an uncommon faculty to seize the strong points of every subject, and make them transparent. He disposed of the pages of his opponents as though they were mere trifles. Toplady, Crisp, and Hill appear in his hands, as pigmies by the side of a giant. He broke through the logical web with which they sought to entangle him, with as much ease as Samson snapped from his arms the withes of the Philistines. He walked up

to their strongest arguments, and brushed them away like thistle blows. Though he treated his opponents with great respect and courtesy, yet he gave no quarter to their errors; but, to use his own language, he pursued the serpent into his darkest hiding-place, and "seizing him with the tongs of truth, he dragged him out to public gaze, stripped of his shining slippery dress, while he darted in vain his forked and hissing tongue."

Calvinism as then taught, with its antinomian fruits, has never recovered from the shock it then received; since that time it has been "smitten with consumption," and though it may linger long upon the confines of the tomb, its ultimate death is certain.

The writings of Fletcher were collected and published, and Mr. Wesley in reviewing the whole, remarks as follows:—"How much good has been occasioned by the publication of that 'circular letter!' This was the happy occasion of Mr. Fletcher's writing those 'checks to Antinomianism;' in which one knows not which to admire most, the purity of the language, the strength and clearness of the argument, or the mildness and sweetness of the spirit that breathes

through the whole; insomuch that I nothing wonder at a serious clergyman, who, being resolved to live and die in his own opinion, when he was pressed to read them, replied: 'No, I will never read Mr. Fletcher's checks, for if I did, I should be of his mind.'"

These writings soon found their way to America, and wherever read, commanded unqualified admiration. The celebrated Dr. Rush having read them, was so delighted, that he declared, if he was ever so happy as to reach heaven, the first man he would inquire for would be John Fletcher: he would take him by the hand, and thank him for the service he had done to the cause of truth in writing his "checks to Antinomianism."

CHAPTER VII.

Much had he read,
Much more had seen: he studied from the life,
And in the original perused mankind.—ARMSTRONG.

Mind's command o'er mind,
Spirit's o'er spirit, is the clear effect
And natural action of an inward gift,
Given of God.—BAILEY'S FESTUS.

Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,
Beggars all wealth.—THOMSON.

HITHERTO, we have in most cases, associated the name of Charles Wesley, with that of his brother John, in relating the events of the Wesleyan Reformation. This is an honor to which he is well entitled, and which, as respects the most of his life, history will ever give him. For many years, he gave himself fully to all the toils of an itinerant ministry, and endured with a cheerful and heroic mind, the violent persecutions of the vulgar and shameless, and the contemptuous epithets and sarcasms, of the more educa-

ted and refined, yet not less hostile and depraved classes of society.

Mr. John Wesley, however, was always considered the responsible and guiding mind. The chief burden, both in planning and executing, always devolved on him; and as years passed, and the work increased, and responsibilities accumulated, he became more and more conspicuous as the guiding mind, the hero of the Reformation. While John increased to the very last year of his eventful life, and seemed ever ready to meet whatever exigencies might occur, Charles decreased:—not in piety—not in zeal, and interest for the work of reformation in which he had borne so conspicuous a part, but in his public labors, and the general supervision of the work, and activity of his ministry. For this, his principal reasons were, domestic cares, and ill-health. But besides this, candor requires us to say, that being more strenuous and inflexible in his adherence to high Church principles, he differed from his brother in respect to some measures adopted by the latter for the extension and permanency of the Reformation. He saw, as he supposed, in these measures, a radical departure

from Apostolic rule, and true Church order, and hence, while he would not publicly oppose, he did not feel at liberty to concur in executing the plan adopted. From this time our reference to Charles Wesley will be less frequent, while we shall see the character of John becoming more prominent as the champion of truth, and the acknowledged leader of the religious reforms of the age.

Notwithstanding the various attacks made upon Wesley and his preachers, and the numerous controversies they were obliged to maintain, in order to sustain the doctrines and discipline of the connection, the societies continued to spread and flourish. The ceaseless activity of Wesley, in visiting the societies throughout the kingdom, though now over seventy years old, animated the preachers with a like zeal; and their union of spirit and action gave them great power and success with the people. They considered themselves the special agents of providence, for the revival of scriptural holiness, and hence, depended greatly upon divine protection. Even the unjust, and often brutal attacks of the ignorant, bigoted, and unprincipled, were not unfrequently

seen to turn to the furtherance of the Gospel, of which the following is an example. Being in Dublin, "I went," says he, "at eleven, and again in the afternoon, to the cathedral, where a young gentleman most valiantly encountered the 'grievous wolves,' as he termed the Methodists. I never heard a man strike more wide of the mark. However, the shallow discourse did good: for it sent abundance of people, rich and poor, to hear and judge for themselves, so that the court, at the top of which I stood, was filled from end to end."—Monday, 29th. "In the evening I preached in the market-place, at Clonmell, to a listening multitude."

This was not his first visit to Ireland, nor was this the first opposition encountered there for the sake of the Gospel. When the Wesleys first opened their mission there, they almost everywhere met the violence of a superstitious and bigoted populace, who, instigated by furious zeal to sustain Catholicism, as well as by their savage dispositions and brutal passions, seemed to thirst for their blood: and many times their lives were in danger. But many years had now passed since they entered that land, as gospel pioneers. The

seed sown upon that sterile soil, had yielded a good degree of pleasant and excellent fruit. Many large and flourishing societies had been formed, convenient places of worship had been erected, and by the stated and zealous attention of the preachers, large congregations were established. Open opposition had pretty much ceased, except now and then, as in the case just related, an ignorant and bigoted Catholic or Churchman, would disgorge himself of his bitterness and spleen from the pulpit and through the press. During this visit, his reception was every way cordial and satisfactory. Wherever he went, he was followed by listening and admiring multitudes.

Having preached in the principal cities and towns, examined the state of the societies, corrected such abuses and irregularities as had grown up during his absence, and met the preachers of Ireland in Conference capacity, he returned to England, the 22d of July, just four months from the time he embarked for Ireland.

The next eight months were spent in travelling at large through England, visiting and confirming the churches, preaching wherever he

could find a congregation, in a church, in a private room, or in the open air: sometimes to a few, but usually to thronging multitudes. During this time he preached at Oxford, and also at South Lye, where forty-six years before he had preached his first sermon.

In the ensuing April he commenced another tour through Scotland, taking Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Aberdeen, Dundee, Dunbar, and many other places of less note, in his way. He preached with his usual freedom and effect in all these places, and in some of them many times, before leaving them. At Perth, he received from the corporate authorities a diploma, written in Latin, giving him the freedom of the city, as follows:

"*Magistratuum illustris ordo et honorandus senatorum cœtus inclytæ civilatis Perthensis, in debiti amoris et affectuum tesseram erga Johannem W——y immunitatibus præfatæ civitatis, societatis etiam et fraternitatis ædilitiæ privilegiis donarunt Aprilis die* 28° *anno Sal.* 1772°."

Translation: "The illustrious order of Magistrates, and honorable body of Aldermen, of the

renowned city of Perth, in token of their deserved love and affection for John Wesley, have presented him with the freedom of the aforesaid city, and with the privileges of a burgess.

"April 28, in the year of salvation, 1772."

In one other town in Scotland he received a similar honor, in respect to which he remarks: "I value it as a token of their respect, though I shall hardly make any further use of it."

As the "circular" of Mr. Shirley had been distributed in Scotland, and the dissenting interest in that part of the kingdom was generally and decidedly Calvinistic, Mr. Wesley was prepared for a cool reception, even by those who once greeted him with the warmth of Christian friendship. But in this he was agreeably disappointed. The instances of disaffection and hostility on this account were very rare, and he had much occasion to rejoice at the triumph of piety and good sense over narrow-minded prejudice and bigotry. Ministers and people generally, treated him with courtesy, and many of them gave him the most convincing proofs of Christian friendship and affection. On the whole, his visit to Scotland was quite as agreeable and useful as he had antici-

pated, and having spent about three months in that region, he took his leave of the land of Wallace and Bruce, and returned to England.

August 4th, the English Conference commenced its session at Leeds. Since their previous meeting Mr. Wesley had made the tour of Ireland, England, and Scotland; preaching generally every day, often twice, and sometimes thrice, and even four times in a day. He had performed a vast amount of pastoral work, in visiting from house to house, mingling in their social meetings, and becoming acquainted with the numerical strength and spiritual state of the societies, by inquiring into everything connected with their prosperity, small as well as great; he had travelled more than five thousand miles, principally on horseback; had read many books, and written his reflections upon them, and upon almost everything else he saw or heard; and yet he returns to the annual gathering of the Conference "not soiled and worn," but with a cheerful countenance, a firm and elastic step, unimpaired either in body or mind, by the rush of years, or the weight of numerous duties, and unparalleled labors and responsibilities.

Nor did he abate his labors at the Conference. Being president, of course the chief direction and burden of conference business fell on him, besides the unusual amount of public labor he performed on those occasions.

"Generally," says he, "during the time of conference, as I was talking from morning till night, I had used to desire one of our brethren to preach in the morning; but, having many things to say, I resolved, with God's help, to preach mornings, as well as evenings. And I found no difference at all; I was no more tired than with my usual labor; that is, no more than if I had been sitting still in my study from morning to night." He makes a similar remark respecting his labor at the next Conference. "I preached mornings as well as evenings, and it was all one. I found myself just as strong, as if I had preached but once a day."

We have here in the person and history of Mr. Wesley, a prominent, and most extraordinary example of health, cheerfulness, diligence, and efficient usefulness, at a time of life when most men think themselves justified in retiring from all business, and especially from the re-

sponsibilities of public life. The great majority of Christian ministers, do not seem to hold themselves competent to do effective service in the gospel field after they have reached the age of sixty. And the people, preferring younger, and more vigorous men, are quite willing to have it so. But is this a true, or false judgment? Considered simply as a fact, it is undoubtedly true; but if we inquire whether it be necessarily true, our answer must be in the negative. A large class of men who begin to decline at forty-five, and then drag out a miserable existence as ministers until sixty, when they voluntarily or from necessity retire to spend the rest of their days in obscurity and inactivity, might, we are confident, if they would commence with the calculation to do so, and make their habits of eating, sleeping, and study tend to this end, extend their ministerial activity, acceptability and usefulness, from ten to fifteen years beyond what they do; and die, not in inglorious inactivity, but with the harness on: or at least make the termination of life and labor more nearly coincident:

"Their body with their charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."

To a mind of delicate Christian sensibility, alive to the pleasures and proprieties of ministerial duty and usefulness, nothing can be more unacceptable than the idea of spending from ten to twenty years of the afternoon of life in a state of inactivity, and inutility. And yet numbers of this class annually pass into this lower sphere of ministerial life, just at that age and period in their history, when their experience and acquisitions, should have fitted them to command the attention and respect of all classes, to exert an influence both extensive and safe; and when the Church should feel that duty, interest, and pleasure, require her to invite them to distinguished walks of usefulness, and a higher place in her affections.

Cases of premature infirmity and decay will occur under the action of special causes, but these are comparatively few; and for such, the Church seldom fails to make due allowance, and exercise proper sympathy. But as to the great body of superannuates, it is quite clear that their disagreeable, and often mortifying relation to the field of ministerial toil, is the result, not of necessity founded in the nature of things, but of neces-

sity arising from inexcusable neglects, or delinquencies, in respect to habits of life, the laws of health, and the improvement of the mind. There are three causes which operate these results, and these causes often combine their influence in forcing a minister from the field before he has accomplished his work.

First. Irregular physical *habits, or inattention* to the *laws of health.* When there is no regular system of diet—no adherence to rule as to the time of eating, or the kind and quantity of food taken—no uniform time of retiring or rising, by which just that quantity of sleep conducive to health is enjoyed: when all this is left without law, or controlled only by appetite, or the force of circumstances, disease will be, *must* be generated, the most perfect health be impaired, and the strongest constitution ultimately fail.

Second. Overacting, or attempting more within a given period than the constitution will endure, or more than can be uniformly performed in the same time, and under the same circumstances. Irregularity in one respect often leads to it in others. The life, instead of being a uniform course of diligence and duty, in which our

strength of body and mind is judiciously employed in promoting the ends of human existence, becomes broken into fragments, portions of which are filled up with extravagant attempts to do what God never required, and what is beyond our natural capabilities, and other portions with the languor and inactivity of the invalid, that our exhausted energies may be recruited, and strength enough acquired to make other eccentric and spasmodic efforts. If the labor be intellectual, an effort is made to accomplish in a week, what might properly employ a month, and is followed by a prostration of energies which forbids intellectual labor of any kind, for many days or weeks succeeding.

A similar condition of health is induced where too much pulpit labor is undertaken, or where the minister preaches "too long or too loud," or in other respects disregards the rules of prudence and laws of health in his Pastoral work.

The strongest constitution cannot long endure such direct contempt of the rules of physical and intellectual health and activity. There will be, there *must* be, premature inability to perform the ordinary work of the minister.

Third.—The third cause of premature superannuation, may be denominated *under*-working: or, ministerial indolence, particularly mental, resulting in intellectual stupor, and inanity. The vigor of the mind depends much upon the exercise of its powers; and the effect of inactivity is scarcely less pernicious, than that of unnatural excitement and over-action. There is a class of ministers who seem to have finished their studies with their graduation to holy orders. That point gained, they have no occasion for application to books. The motive for study, if any exists, is too weak to rouse them from mental sluggishness. They soon use up the little capital with which they started. The same set of ideas serve them for all times, and all occasions. Their acquaintance with language being limited, their phraseology is stereotyped. The same thoughts are repeated in the same words so often, that they become uninteresting—stale,—and the hearer can anticipate the sentences before they are uttered. The effect upon the preacher, is dulness; upon the people, listlessness. He has delivered the same things so often, in the very same words, that they are insipid to him-

self. Having failed to interest himself in his subject before appearing in the pulpit, he lacks inspiration. He has no spiritual zest, or holy unction to raise him to the dignity of the gospel theme.

The result of all is, he fails to instruct and profit the people. He complains of their inattention, and they complain of his incompetency. A dissatisfaction grows up between them, and they part in mutual disgust. He takes another charge at the ensuing conference, but not having acquired sufficient industry and mental vigor to "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," he labors under the same embarrassments, and terminates his relation to the people under similar circumstances. Every such result increases his depression, and diminishes his prospect of future success. His standing becomes unavoidably known to the churches generally; the people here and there petition against him, and soon the bishop and his cabinet find themselves obliged to place his name on the list of exceptions, that they may, when they have more time, consider what can be done with

him, or, as a final resort, present him to the Conference as a candidate for location without his consent. If the latter course be adopted, the sympathy of the Conference places him on the superannuated list. The plea of ill-health cannot be urged, and hence the action of the Conference is based on that of mental imbecility. The plea is true. The brother can do anything but preach. He has neglected mental application so long, that he is an incorrigible sluggard in respect to everything requiring intellectual effort. He is about forty-five, possibly fifty years of age; and the Church has the delightful prospect of supporting him as a superannuate, from twenty to thirty years.

This is no fancy picture. There are scores of men on the list of superannuates, whose premature retirement from the ranks of the efficient is wholly owing to one or more of the causes above named. If they were never called to preach, they should not have entered the ministry. If they were, they have incurred a fearful responsibility in so neglecting or outraging the laws of health, or neglecting mental improvement, as to render themselves incompetent to the work im-

posed on them by their high and holy commission.

The secret of Mr. Wesley's health, mental vigor, and unabated activity to extreme old age, must be looked for in his temperate and regular habits, and his mental industry. The first secured perfect health, the last kept his mind fresh and vigorous, and furnished with topics of discourse ever new and interesting both to himself and the people. It is true, he recognized the hand of Providence in fitting him for his work, and sustaining him in it, but he was too well acquainted with the laws of Providence to expect the end without using the means. This is clear from the following entry in his Journal: Tuesday, July 28th, 1774. "This being my birth-day, the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering, How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? That my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves firmer than they were then? That I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand cause is the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. The chief means are,

1. My constantly rising at four for about fifty years. 2. My generally preaching at five in the morning—one of the most healthy exercises in the world. 3. My never travelling less by sea and land than four thousand five hundred miles in a year." On entering his seventy-third year, he makes similar reflections on the state of his health and strength, and gives as another reason for it, evenness of temper. "I *feel* and *grieve*," says he, "but by the grace of God I *fret* at nothing."

Mr. Wesley now found himself at the head of a large and flourishing body of Christians. His adherents were not abstracted from other communions, but were mostly taken from the ranks of the irreligious, many being converted and reformed from courses of abandoned wickedness. Being directly or indirectly indebted to him for their recovery from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, they, with great cordiality and veneration, acknowledged him as their chief pastor, and submitted to his godly admonitions and authority. And he took the oversight of them, not with ambitious views and feelings, "not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

"not as being a lord over God's heritage," but in meekness, kindness, humility, and self-sacrificing devotion to the work of saving souls; he was an example to the flock, worthy of imitation.

At the time of which we are speaking (1775), the number of preachers under his direction, "fully engaged in the work, amounted to one hundred and fifty; and the societies in Great Britain and Ireland, to upward of thirty-five thousand, exclusive of the regular hearers." Calculating three hearers for every member of society, a population of not less than one hundred and fifty thousand were receiving religious instruction under the labors of Wesley and his preachers. Well might he say, in a letter to Mr. Fletcher, "What an amazing work has God wrought in these kingdoms in less than forty years! and it not only continues, but increases, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland; nay, it has lately spread into New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina. But the wise men of the world say, 'When Mr. Wesley drops, then all this is at an end.' And so it surely will, unless, before God calls him hence, one is found to stand in his place."

The object of this letter was to obtain the consent of Mr. Fletcher to act as his successor, as general superintendent of the connection, when God should remove him to another world. The subject was attended with no little difficulty. Authority to govern must be lodged somewhere, and Mr. Wesley saw that the continued prosperity and increase of the work of reformation, depended much upon a judicious deposit of power. It could hardly be expected that the preachers and people would, or could, ever feel the same respect, deference, and veneration for any other man, that they did for Mr. Wesley. This he knew very well, yet he seemed to think Mr. Fletcher would come nearer to it than any other man in his confidence. His brother Charles had become infirm, and it was not probable he would long survive. Besides, his temperament, and some of his views of ecclesiastical government and Church order, were, in certain important respects, different from those of his brother. Having no hope of a successor in his brother, Mr. Wesley earnestly addressed himself to Mr. Fletcher:

"Thou art the man. God has given you a

measure of loving faith, and a single eye to his glory. He has given you some knowledge of men and things, particularly of the old plan of Methodism. You are blessed with some health, activity, and diligence; together with a degree of learning. And to all these, he has lately added, by a way none could have foreseen, favor, both with the preachers and with the whole people! Come out in the name of God! Come to the help of the Lord, against the mighty! Come while I am alive, and capable of labor!

'*Dum superest lachesi quod torqueat, et pedibus me porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo.*"

("While any of the thread of life remains unspun, and I bear myself upon my feet, without aid from a staff.")

The only objection Mr. Fletcher urged against this proposition, was, that he thought himself inadequate. He therefore modestly, though firmly declined. But had he accepted the offer, the plan would have been a failure, for, a few years after this he was called into another world. Though this effort to settle the succession as to the government of the connection was

unsuccessful, yet, the subject was not allowed to sleep. It received the maturest thoughts of Mr. Wesley, until 1784, when it was effected by a legal instrument enrolled in chancery, called "A Deed of Declaration," in which one hundred preachers, mentioned by name, were declared to be "the Conference of the people called Methodists." By means of this deed, a legal description was given to the term Conference, and the settlement of the chapels upon trustees was provided for; so that the appointment of preachers to officiate in them should be vested in the Conference, as it had before been in Mr. Wesley. This instrument defined the powers of the "Conference," or "legal hundred," provided for the annual election of president, for the filling of vacancies occasioned by death, expulsion, or otherwise, and for some other contingencies. The "Deed of Declaration" being finished and recorded, and the stability of the government secured for the future, Mr. Wesley felt much relieved of anxiety respecting what might happen after his decease; and he never referred to the subject afterwards without the highest satisfaction. Some one who was dissat-

isfied with the arrangement made, had asked in a querulous tone, "But what need was there for any deed at all?" To this he replies:

"There was the utmost need of it; without some authentic deed fixing the meaning of the term, the moment I died the Conference had been nothing. Therefore any of the proprietors of the land on which our preaching houses were built, might have seized them for their own use; and there would have been none to hinder them; for the Conference would have been nobody, a mere empty name." "In all the pains I have taken about this absolutely necessary deed, I have been laboring, not for myself (I have no interest therein) but for the whole body of Methodists; in order to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure. That is, if they continue to walk by faith, and to show forth their faith by their works; otherwise, I pray God to root out the memorial of them from the earth."

The following letter, which was addressed to the Conference, and read to them at their first session after Mr. Wesley's decease, will show the purity of his motives, and the impartiality of

his friendship and affection for his ministerial brethren.

"My Dear Brethren:—Some of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear, that, after my decease, you would exclude them, either from preaching in connection with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know of no other way to prevent such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you. I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the deed of declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on, among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

"In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons, in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood School, in disposing of the yearly contributions, and the preacher's fund, or any other public money; but to do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or par-

tiality, and God will be with you even to the end."

On entering his eighty-first year, Mr. Wesley made the following entry in his Journal:—"I have this day lived fourscore years; and, by the mercy of God, my eyes are not waxed dim; and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since just the same I have now. God grant I may never live to be useless. Rather may I

> 'My body with my charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live.'"

At this advanced age, Mr. Wesley abated nothing of his usual labors. He continued his annual tours in the three kingdoms, performing the various public and private duties which claimed his attention at every step of his progress, and even extended his travels to Holland, whence his printed sermons had preceded him, and created a strong desire among the people to see and hear the distinguished author. For two months he preached in the principal towns of Holland to large and highly interested assemblies, much to his own satisfaction and their spiritual profit, and returned to London in time

to attend the session of the Conference in July.

As Mr. Wesley advanced towards the termination of his illustrious career, his societies in America became anxious that he should make some provision of a governmental character for them, which might have the same practical effect as that made for the English Conference. This was the more necessary, after the war of the Revolution, which had not only separated the colonies from the mother country, but had annihilated the English Church before existing there. He felt this to be a very grave subject, and that consequences most important and lasting would result from his action, whatever it might be. His only solicitude was, that the plan adopted might meet the approbation of God, and secure His blessing to the Church. He gained all the information he could respecting the necessities of the case—asked counsel of all in whose judgment he could confide, and then acted out the convictions of his own mind as to the course to be pursued, leaving the vindication of his motives in the hands of God and posterity. The plan adopted was to erect the Ameri-

can societies into an independent Church, and give them the Episcopal form of government. We find the following account of the final disposition of this matter in the Journal of Mr. Wesley:—

Question. "What is the state of our societies in North America?

Answer. "It may best appear by the following letter. If any one is minded to dispute concerning diocesan Episcopacy, he may; but I have better work.

"BRISTOL, September 10, 1784.

"By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by Congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice. And in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

"Lord King's 'Account of the Primitive Church' convinced me many years ago, that Bishops and Presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining a part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace, sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.

"But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have legal jurisdiction; in America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together, there is none either to baptize, or administer the Lord's supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke, and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as

Elders among them by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper.

"If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"It has indeed been proposed to desire the English Bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object. (1.) I desired the Bishop of London to ordain only one; but could not prevail. (2.) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. (3.) If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! (4.) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith God has so strangely made them free."

The American Societies thus provided for, were organized into an Episcopal Church in 1784, and have thenceforth been known as the METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH in the United States of America, having every ministerial *order* and office, which by Scripture and primitive usage, belong, of right, to the Christian Church. This was the last great act of Mr. Wesley's life, and no act that he ever performed has been, or is likely to be, attended with more important results. At the time, he had to meet many objections and much opposition; even some of his friends affected to believe that he had materially injured his reputation. To the objection that he had never been ordained a bishop, and therefore had no right to establish an episcopacy, his answer was, that by the ordination of providence he was "a scriptural *episkopos* as much as any man in England or in Europe,"—that bishops and presbyters were originally the same *order*, and had the same right to ordain—that the uninterrupted succession he knew to be "a fable, which no man ever did or can prove"—and that the English Church, having become extinct in America, the necessities of the case were impera-

tive, making it a clear case of duty that he should provide the ordinances of religion for his American brethren.

On this ground he rested, and here we rest the propriety and necessity of his ordination acts, and the validity of the Methodist Episcopal ministry. And to sustain this position, we have the declarations of the most distinguished prelates of the Protestant Reformation. We close this chapter with the following remarks:

1. There are rightfully but two *orders* of ministers in the Christian Church, viz., deacons and presbyters, or elders.

2. Presbyters, or elders, were also anciently called bishops, especially when they had the oversight of a congregation.

3. The right of ordination was originally vested in presbyters.

4. The title of bishop did not anciently designate a distinct order, but merely an office in the order of presbyters; and this office was a matter of expediency, and presbyters were elevated to it by the act of their brethren.

5. The claim now set up for the exclusive right of ordination in bishops of the third order,

"*jure divino*;" is a *usurpation*, and commenced about the latter part of the fourth century. Hence Mosheim says, speaking of those times: "Many of the privileges formerly belonging to the presbyters and people, were usurped by the bishops."

6. The boasted line of succession of bishops of the third order, superior to, and distinct from presbyters, supposed by some to be so necessary to the perpetuity of the Church, and a valid ministry, has no existence, except in the imaginations, sermons, and essays, of those who find their interest in the advocacy of such dogmas.

7. The Methodist Episcopal Church has all the ministerial *orders*, *offices*, and *powers* belonging of right to any Episcopal form of ecclesiastical government, and occupies the true scriptural ground, equidistant from ministerial parity on one hand, and the unlawful and arrogant claims of divine-right prelacy on the other.

CHAPTER VIII.

That man lives greatly,
Whate'er his fate, or fame, who greatly dies;
High flushed with hope, when heroes shall despair.
YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS

Death's but a path that must be trod,
If man would ever pass to God.—PARNELL.

Can that man be dead,
Whose spiritual influence is upon his kind?
He lives in glory; and his speaking dust,
Has more of life than half its breathing moulds.
MISS LANDON.

THE closing scene of Mr. Wesley's life, now drew near. He had outlived all those clerical contemporaries with whom he started upon his illustrious career, and who had shared with him the labors, sufferings, and triumphs of his distinguished position.

Mr. Whitefield had departed this life while on a tour in America, September, 1770, in the midst of his extraordinary labors and usefulness. They had separated from each other, on account of a radical difference in their creeds, and for a

while were partially alienated in their feelings; but being honest, and deeply pious, they soon rose above every improper feeling, and were restored to the confidence and friendship of each other. The sincerity of this reconciliation is evinced by a letter which Mr. Whitefield wrote Mr. Wesley at a time when the latter was supposed to be near his end.

"I pity myself and the Church, but not you. A radiant throne awaits you; and ere long you will enter into your Master's joy. Yonder he stands with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head, amid the admiring throng of saints and angels; but I, poor I, that have been waiting for my dissolution these nineteen years, must be left behind, to grovel here below! Well, this is my comfort, it cannot be long ere the chariots will be sent even for worthless me. If prayers can detain you, even you, reverend and dear sir, shall not leave us yet; but if the decree is gone forth, that you must fall asleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the embraces of triumphant love. If in the land of the dying, I hope to pay my last respects to you next week. If not, reverend and

dear sir, f-a-r-e-w-e-l-l: *I præ, sequar, etsi non passibus æquis.* My heart is too big; tears trickle down too fast, and you, I fear, are too weak for me to enlarge."

Providence so ordered that Mr. Whitefield was the first to be called away; and Mr. Wesley paid a sincere and eloquent tribute to the memory of his departed friend in a discourse preached on the occasion of his death. In August, 1785, Mr. Fletcher departed this life in the most happy frame of mind. When articulation had become extremely difficult, he exclaimed:

"Mercy's full power I soon shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love."

'I was intimately acquainted with him," says Mr. Wesley, "for above thirty years; I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles; and in all that time I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and in life, within fourscore years, but one equal to him I have not known—one so inwardly and outwardly

devoted to God. So unblamable a character in every respect I have not found, either in Europe or America; and I scarce expect to find another such on this side of eternity."

Charles Wesley, the brother of John, died on the 29th of March, 1788, aged 79 years. He was blessed in his last hours, with solid hope and unshaken confidence in God. At his own desire he was buried in Maryenborn church-yard. The pall was supported by eight clergymen. On his tombstone are the following lines, written by himself on the death of one of his friends:

"With poverty of spirit blest,
Rest, happy saint, in Jesus rest;
A sinner saved, through grace forgiven,
Redeemed from earth, to reign in heaven!
Thy labors of unwearied love,
By thee forgot, are crowned above;
Crowned through the mercy of thy Lord,
With a free, full, immense reward."

Thus one after another did Wesley's companions in toil drop into the tomb by his side, and he was called to pronounce their funeral dirge. "It cannot be long," says he, "in the course of nature, before I shall follow."

"My race of glory's run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them at rest."

Still, he felt little of that decay and infirmity which are the usual accompaniments of extreme age, as is evident from the following entry in his journal.

"Saturday, June 28th, 1788. I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year; and what cause have I to praise God, as for a thousand spiritual blessings, so for bodily blessings also! How little have I suffered yet, by 'the rush of numerous years.' It is true I am not so agile as I was in times past. I do not run or walk as fast as I did; my sight is a little decayed: my left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves me to read: I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple (occasioned by a blow received some months since), and in my right shoulder and arm; which I impute partly to a sprain, and partly to the rheumatism. I find likewise some decay in my memory, with regard to names and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard, twenty, forty, or sixty years ago: neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite (though I want but a third part of the food I did once): nor do I feel any such thing as weari-

ness, either in travelling or preaching; and I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons; which I do as readily, and I believe, as correctly as ever. To what cause can I impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless, to the power of God, fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein; and, next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children.

"May we not impute it as inferior means—1. To my constant exercise and change of air? 2. To my never having lost a night's sleep, sick or well, at land or at sea, since I was born? 3. To my having sleep at command; so that, whenever I feel myself almost worn out, I call it, and it comes day or night? 4. To my having constantly, for above sixty years, risen at four in the morning? 5. To my constant preaching at five in the morning for above fifty years? 6. To my having had so little pain in my life; and so little sorrow or anxious care? Even now, though I find daily, pain in my eye, or temple, or arm; yet it is never violent, and seldom lasts many minutes at a time. Whether or not this is sent to give me warning that I am shortly to quit

this tabernacle, I do not know, but, be it one way or the other, I have only to say,

> 'My remnant of days
> I spend to his praise
> Who died the whole world to redeem;
> Be they many or few;
> My days are his due,
> And they all are devoted to him.'

"I preached in the morning on Psalm xc. 12, in the evening on Acts xiii. 40, 41; and endeavored to improve the hours between to the best advantage."

Not only had Mr. Wesley outlived his compeers, but also, most of the persecutions and prejudices, which met him at every step for more than thirty-years after commencing his course as a Reformer. He had been so long before the public, without in the least deviating from the declared purpose of his life: his Christian simplicity,—his untiring industry—his zeal, and benevolence—his disinterestedness, had been so consistently, and conspicuously displayed, that malice and hateful bigotry, and sensual infidelity were overawed in his presence, and even the proud and arrogant aristocracy of the national

ecclesiastical hierarchy, were constrained to treat him with courtesy.

Fifty years previous to this, nearly every church in the kingdom was closed against him, and he was seldom allowed to preach in peace in a private room, or in the open field. But now the doors of the parish churches were almost everywhere thrown open, and he had many more invitations to preach charity sermons than he could possibly accept; and accustomed as he had been to see large assemblies, he was, nevertheless, often astonished at the multitudes of all classes who flocked to hear him. This marked change in the manifestations of public sentiment toward him, was doubtless somewhat gratifying, but we do not learn that it had the effect to inspire him with any other than a feeling of gratitude to God that he had dealt so mercifully with him,—that he had sustained him amid terrible oppositions, when the powers of hell were in league against him,—that he had so overruled the wrath of man as to make it an occasion of spreading the Gospel,—that he had allowed him to see the triumph of truth over error, generosity over envy, and charity over bigotry,—and that he had made

even "his enemies to be at peace with him." This very desirable state of things continued to the close of his protracted and eventful life. As in the case of the German Reformer, though his life had been often menaced, yet the Providence of God guided him to a quiet and peaceful death.

Mr. Wesley now felt that he held his life by a very slight and uncertain tenure; yet he was still anxious that every moment should be given to God. Jan. 1st, 1790, he says, "I am an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labor; I can preach and write still."

On the 26th of the following April, he remarks, "I finished my sermon on the Wedding Garment, perhaps the last that I shall write. My eyes are now waxed dim; my natural force is abated. However, while I can, I would fain do a little for God before I drop into the dust."

These extracts show with what calmness he approached death, and how anxious he was that every power of his mind, during the few days

that remained to him, should be given to the cause of truth and righteousness. From this state of mind there was not the least variation at any time previous to his departure.

Upon the 28th of June, he thus writes, "This day I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For nearly eighty-six years, I found none of the infirmities of old age,—my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated. But last August, I found almost a sudden change,—my eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me; my strength likewise quite forsook me, and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain, only it seems nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till

'The weary springs of life stand still at last.'"

This, in his case, as also in the death of his brother Charles, was literally true. A life of industry and usefulness, in which habits of temperance had been scrupulously observed, and the laws of health seldom, if ever violated, was rewarded with a serene and cheerful evening, and terminated without disease or pain, by a gentle decay of nature—

"As fades a summer cloud away,
Or gently shuts the eye of day."

February, 1791, he wrote his last counsels to his brethren in America. "See," said he, "that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue."

Being conscious that his end was near, he says: "Those that desire to write, or say anything to me have no time to lose: *time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind.*"

He still preached as usual, in different places in London and its vicinity, generally meeting the society after preaching in each place, and exhorting them to *live as brethren, fear God, and honor the king*, which he wished them to consider as his last advice. He then usually concluded the exercises with giving out the hymn commencing,

"Shrinking from the cold hand of death,"

and embracing the following verse, which he

often repeated and sung, in the closing years of life:

> "O that, without a lingering groan,
> I may the welcome word receive,
> My body with my charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live."

He proceeded in this way until the 17th, when he preached at Lambeth: but on his return, seemed much indisposed, and said he had taken cold. The next day, however, he read and wrote as usual; and in the evening preached at Chelsea, from "The King's business requires haste," —although with some difficulty, having a high degree of fever upon him. The next day, and the day following, he continued in his usual employments, though, to those about him, his complaints seemed evidently increasing. The ensuing Sunday he rose early as usual, but seemed quite unfit for any of his Sabbath-day's exercises. At seven o'clock he was obliged to lie down, and slept between three and four hours. When he awoke, he said, "I have not had such a comfortable sleep this fortnight past." In the afternoon he lay down again, and slept an hour or two. Afterwards two of his own discourses on our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, were read

to him; and in the evening he came down to supper.

Monday the 21st of February, he seemed much better; and though his friends tried to dissuade him from it, he would keep an engagement made some time before, to dine at Twickenham. In his way thither, he called on Lady Mary Fitzgerald; the conversation was truly profitable, and well became a last visit. On Tuesday, he went on with his usual work, preached in the evening at the chapel in City-Road, and seemed much better than he had been for several days. On Wednesday, he went to Leatherhead, and preached to a small company, on, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." This proved to be his last sermon; here ended the public labors of this great minister of Jesus Christ.

On Thursday, he visited Mr. Wolff's lovely family, from whence he returned on Friday, extremely ill. His friends were struck with the manner of his getting out of the carriage, and still more when he went up stairs and sat down in his chair. He sent every one out of the room, and desired not to be interrupted for half an hour.

When that time was expired, some mulled wine was brought him, of which he drank a little. In a few minutes he threw it up, and said, "I must lie down." His friends were now alarmed, and the physician (Dr. Whitehead) was called in. On his entering the room, he said in a cheerful voice, "Doctor, they are more afraid than hurt." Most of this day he lay in bed, had a quick pulse, with a considerable degree of fever and stupor. The next day, he continued much in the same state; taking very little, either of medicine or nourishment. Sunday morning, he seemed better, got up, and took a cup of tea. Sitting in his chair, he looked quite cheerful, and repeated these words of his brother Charles:

"Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend:
And O! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end!"

Soon after, he emphatically said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Exerting himself to converse with some friends, he was soon fatigued, and obliged to lie down. After lying some time quiet, he looked up and said, "Speak to me, I cannot speak." On which one of the company said,

"Shall we pray with you, sir?" He earnestly replied, "Yes." And while they prayed, his whole soul seemed engaged with God for an answer, and his hearty *Amen*, showed that he perfectly understood what was said. About half an hour after, he said, "There is no need of more; when at Bristol, my words were,

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"

One said, "Is this the present language of your heart, and do you now feel as you did then?" He replied, "Yes." When the same person repeated,

"Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown through Christ my own,"

and added, "'Tis enough. He our precious Emanuel, has purchased, has promised all;" he earnestly replied, "He is all! He is all!" After this the fever was very high, and at times, affected his head; but even then, though his head was affected by a temporary derangement, his heart seemed wholly engaged in his Master's work. In the evening he got up again, and while

sitting in his chair, he said, "How necessary it is for every one to be upon the right foundation!

'I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me!'

We must be justified by faith; and then go on to perfection." On the next day he said, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus," and, referring to the text, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," he emphatically said, "That is the foundation, the only foundation, and there is no other." He also repeated three or four times in the space of a few hours, "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

On the day before his death, after a very restless night, he began to sing:

"All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored;
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord!
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to thy creatures return,
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

"O wouldst thou again be made known;
Again in thy Spirit descend,
And set up in each of thine own
A kingdom that never shall end.
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to thy sway."

Here his strength failed; but after lying still awhile, he called for pen and ink. They were brought to him; but his hand, which had been a means of conveying comfort and instruction to thousands, could no longer perform its office. "Tell me," said one, "what you would say." "Nothing," answered he, "but that God is with us." In a little while he broke out, in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished all present, in these words:

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And, when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

"Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God; he made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train;
His truth forever stands secure;
He saves th' oppressed, he feeds the poor,
And none shall find his promise vain."

During the same day when he appeared to change for death, he said with a weak voice, "Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest the tongue." He then sung:

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree."

Here his voice failed. After gasping for breath, he said, "Now we have done all." He was then laid in the bed, from which he rose no more. After resting a little, he called to those who were with him, "to pray and praise." They kneeled down, and the room seemed to be filled with the divine presence. His whole soul seemed to be engaged, and showed how ardently he longed for the full accomplishment of their united desires. And when one of the preachers was praying in a very expressive manner, that if God were about to take away their father to his eternal rest, he would be pleased to continue and increase his blessing upon the doctrine and discipline which he had long made his servant the means of propagating and establishing in the world; such a degree of fervor accompanied his

loud *amen*, as was every way expressive of the interest he felt in the object of the petition.

On rising from their knees, he took the hand of each, and with the utmost placidness saluted them and said, "Farewell, farewell."

A little after, a person coming in, he strove to speak, but could not. Finding they could not understand him, he paused a little, and then, with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us;" and soon after, lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph, not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, "*The best of all is, God is with us.*" Being told that his brother's widow was come, he said, "He giveth his servants rest." He thanked her as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavored to kiss her. On wetting his lips, he said, "We thank thee, O Lord, for these, and all thy mercies: bless the Church and king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, forever and ever." At another time he said, "He causeth his servants to lie down in peace." Then, pausing a little, he cried, "The clouds drop fatness!" and

soon after. "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." He then called those present to prayer; and though he was greatly exhausted, he appeared still more fervent in spirit. These exertions were, however, too much for his feeble frame; and most of the night following, though he often attempted to repeat the Psalm before mentioned, he could only utter—

"I'll praise—I'll praise."

On Wednesday morning the closing scene drew near. Mr. Bradford, his faithful friend, prayed with him: and the last words he was heard to articulate were, "Farewell." A few minutes before ten, while several friends were kneeling around his bed, without a sigh or groan this man of God, this beloved pastor of thousands, entered into the joy of his Lord.

He was in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and had been sixty-five years in the ministry. His death was an admirable close of a protracted, eventful, and highly useful life.

At the desire of many of his friends, his corpse was placed in the New Chapel, and remained there the day before his interment. His face during that time had a heavenly smile upon

it, and a beauty which was admired by all that saw it. The crowds that went to see him was so great, that business was generally suspended in the City Road, and it was with great difficulty that any carriage could pass. His funeral took place early in the morning, lest any accident should occur in consequence of the vast concourse of people which was otherwise expected to attend. The sermon for the occasion was preached by Dr. Whitehead, who subsequently became his biographer; and the Reverend Mr. Richardson, who now lies with him in the same vault, read the burial service. When, at the grave-side, he pronounced the words, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dear *father*, now departed," the people, who nearly filled the burying-ground, burst into loud weeping; and it is believed that scarcely a dry eye was to be seen in the entire assembly. When the funeral sermon was preached, the men occupied the floor of the City Road Chapel, and the women the gallery; and, with one solitary exception, it is said, that not a colored riband was to be seen in the vast congregation. One lady, with a blue riband on her beaver hat,

found her way into the gallery; and, on observing her singularity, she instantly tore it from her head, and thus assumed the garb of mourning with the rest of the people.

The following is the inscription upon Mr. Wesley's tomb:

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE VENERABLE JOHN WESLEY, A. M.,
LATE FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

This great Light arose,
By the singular providence of God,
to enlighten these Nations,
and to revive, enforce, and defend
the pure apostolical doctrines and practices of the
Primitive Church;
which he continued to do, both by his writing and his labors,
for more than half a century;
and, to his inexpressible joy,
not only beheld their influence extending
and their efficacy witnessed
in the hearts and lives of many thousands,
as well in the Western World, as in these kingdoms;
but also, far above all human power or expectation,
lived to see provision made,
by the singular grace of God,
for their continuance and establishment,
to the joy of future generations!

Reader, if thou art constrained to bless the instrument,
give God the glory!
After having languished a few days, he at length finished his
course
and his life together,
gloriously triumphing over death,
March 2d, An. Dom. 1791,
in the eighty-eighth year of his age.

The following epitaph, by another author, is inscribed upon a marble tablet in the City Road Chapel:—

"The best of all is, God is with us."

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M. A.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

A man, in learning and sincere piety,
scarcely inferior to any;
In zeal, ministerial labors, and extensive usefulness,
superior, perhaps, to all men, since the days of St. Paul.
Regardless of fatigue, personal danger, and disgrace,
he went out into the highways and hedges,
calling sinners to repentance,
and publishing the gospel of peace.

He was the Founder of the Methodist societies,
and the chief promoter and patron
of the plan of Itinerant preaching,
which he extended through Great Britain and Ireland,
the West Indies, and America, with unexampled success.
He was born the xvii of June, MDCCIII,
and died the ii of March, MDCCXCI,
in sure and certain hope of eternal life,
through the Atonement and Mediation of
a Crucified Saviour.

He was sixty-five years in the ministry,
and fifty-two an Itinerant Preacher;
He lived to see, in these kingdoms only,
about three hundred Itinerant,
and one thousand Local Preachers,
raised up from the midst of his own people,
and eighty thousand persons in the societies under his care.
His name will be ever had in grateful remembrance
by all who rejoice in the universal spread
of the Gospel of Christ.

SOLI DEO GLORIA.

The death of Mr. Wesley attracted the public notice beyond any former example, perhaps, of a clergyman, however dignified. It being generally known that he died as he had lived, and evinced in death the uprightness and integrity of his life, the impression on the public mind in favor of his character and of Methodism, was almost universal; so that some persons said, "Mr. Wesley will do more good by his death, than he did in his whole life." Many strong prejudices which had been cherished for a series of years, gave way as this RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD, in peace with God and all mankind, and with joyful assurance of endless felicity, took his leave of time and toil, and received at the hand of his approving Master, the CROWN OF REJOICING.

With abundant opportunity to amass an ample fortune, he died poor, leaving very little business to be settled by his executors. Among the provisions of his will, we find the following: "I give £6, to be divided among the six poor men, named by the Assistant, who shall carry my body to the grave; for I particularly desire there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp,

except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom. I solemnly adjure my executors in the name of God, punctually to observe this."

"Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
The better fight; who single hast maintained,
Against revolted multitudes, the cause
Of God; in word mightier than they in arms."

CHAPTER IX.

Some angel guide my pencil while I draw,
What nothing less than angel can exceed:
A man on earth devoted to the skies.—YOUNG.

He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.—SHAKS. HAMLET.

THE character of John Wesley is a subject for a philosopher. Yet the philosophic mind, strong and accurate in perception and penetration, will fail to comprehend and appreciate his character and motives unless it acts with the advantage of Christian faith, and is baptized with the spirit and zeal of true religion. The want of these advantages has occasioned many misapprehensions on the part of some, who, for various purposes, mostly sectarian and selfish, have recorded their judgment of Wesley, as a man, a Christian, and a Divine. Perhaps, constituted as the world is, it is not to be expected that perfect justice will be done the memory of those whose whole life has been a standing reproof to infidelity, irreligion

and superficial Christianity. Men must understand something of the moving motives of the Christian religion by experience, before they can properly estimate the character and aims of one who, during a long life, held the flattery and frowns of the world in equal disregard, and seemed only intent upon saving souls.

> "Happy, if with *his* latest breath,
> *He might* but gasp his name,
> Preach him to all, and cry in death,
> Behold! behold! the Lamb."

If the mind be poisoned by skepticism, or religious bigotry, or rendered barren of Christian sympathies by the spirit of a wicked and selfish world, there can be no just appreciation of the feelings and motives of the zealous, ardent, self-sacrificing Christian, who, like Paul, glories in nothing, "Save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is to this ignorance of the Christian spirit, and of the power of Christian motives rather than to any unworthy intention, that we attribute the numerous errors and misapprehensions which occur in the life of Wesley, as written by Dr. Southey, and the consequent injustice done by him to the reputation of that pre-emi-

nently holy and useful man of God. Southey was incapable of correct judgment upon the subjects of which he wrote. He was accustomed to look at society only in its corrupt and selfish state; and his judgment of the possible purity and perfection of man was formed from his observation of the general practice of men in social and public life. As he saw men generally acting from interested and selfish motives, he concluded, without due credit for the influence of the Gospel upon the heart and life, that nothing above this could be predicated of humanity; and upon this narrow and essentially defective view of the present relations and susceptibilities of man, his opinions of the motives and conduct of Wesley were formed. As a matter of course, he was not unfrequently held up to public view in no very enviable light. Had Southey himself been anything more than a caterer to a vicious public taste—had his mind been unbiasedby a vain and skeptical philosophy—had he known anything of the constraining love of Christ—had his own aims been pure and unselfish, he would not have found it so difficult to allow purity and disinterestedness in others.

There is much truth in what is said by Macaulay, though perhaps it is said with undue severity, viz., that Southey "possesses two faculties, which were never vouchsafed in measure so copious to any human being: the faculty of believing without a reason, and the faculty of hating without a provocation." "In the mind of Southey," says he, "reason has no place at all, as either leader or follower, either sovereign or slave. He does not seem to know what an argument is. He never uses arguments himself. He never troubles himself to answer the arguments of his opponents." And yet he thinks Southey's Life of Wesley will live, because it is a "*popular* account of a most remarkable moral revolution, and of a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature, whose genius in government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered as the highest good of his species."

Time has already corrected many, and will ultimately correct all the material mistakes and

misrepresentations into which the interested, bigoted, and malicious have been led, in forming their estimate of the character and career of Wesley.

To do full justice to the character of this man of God would require an ample volume. His powers as a man, his attainments as a scholar, and his experience and usefulness as a Christian, present him to us in so many and interesting points of light, that we cannot, in the space allowed us, do more than briefly touch the numerous and varied topics embraced in the subject.

The portraits of Mr. Wesley are so common and accurate, that little need be said as to his personal appearance. One fact may not be generally known, viz., that his size, or stature, was less than ordinary: and though he endured an amount of labor for sixty years, which has rarely if ever been equalled by a human being, yet his physical constitution was not, in youth, considered firm. It became so in after years, under the regular and temperate habits he adopted and maintained through life. Though his features were not remarkable for beauty, yet there was a general perfection of symmetry and con-

tour which was at least agreeable: while tha freshness so peculiar to the English countenance, and so grateful to the eye, combined with his mild, benignant, and intellectual expression, gave him a decided advantage, and seldom failed to prepossess the mind of the stranger. His manners were easy, and his bearing dignified. Intellectually and educationally, Mr. Wesley was a great man.

We are aware that a variety of conflicting opinions are entertained on what constitutes true greatness, yet there are certain outlines in which all must agree as a starting-point. True greatness does *not* consist in the remarkable development of any *one* trait of the human mind or character; but in the harmonious combination of all those attributes which prepare for usefulness, dignify and adorn. A man may be highly distinguished for a particular element of character—he may excel in the development of some mental and moral equality, and yet be far from sustaining a claim to true greatness. A great orator is not a great man; he is only a great orator. If he is distinguished for nothing but his oratory, he has potency without utility; he is a

blind Cyclop with a fearful power. Nor is the great general necessarily a great man; he may use his generalship to gratify a private ambition, he may be regardless of the principles of justice, reckless of human life, and only actuated by an insatiable thirst for conquest.

So also the great statesman: he may perfectly understand the principles of his own government, and those of other countries; he may be able to detect the faults of all governments, be acquainted with the means of national prosperity, and the causes of national overthrow, and yet be far less than the great man, because destitute of patriotism, or so selfish, or bound by the chains of party, as to act without independence, or act only for party purposes; or personal aggrandizement.

High intellectual endowments, and extensive, and varied literary acquirements are not always associated with true greatness. There may be, and often is knowledge without wisdom; the mind may be so inflated with pride and vanity, that the dignity of the scholar is lost in the ostentation of the pedant. Besides, whatever the polish of the mind the moral powers may remain uncultivated. The character is distorted, be-

cause the regulating influence of moral principle is wanting. Such an one may possess the elements of a great man, but they have not been rightly expanded: the foundation may have been laid in natural endowments, but the parts have not preserved a just proportion in development, and the symmetry and beauty of the superstructure are wanting. No one ability, mental or moral, natural or acquired, can exalt a man to true greatness, however much he may shine in its display.

The page of history is loaded with the names of those who have made grand exhibitions of particular traits of character, but who have in other respects given abundant proof of weakness, mental and moral eccentricity and obliquity which have rendered them contemptible in the eyes of posterity. Thousands have entered the lists and contended for the prize, but very few have borne away the palm of victory. The great man possesses a well-balanced character. To a rich cluster of natural endowments, he adds those acquirements which serve to unfold his powers for practical purposes. No one characteristic is greatly predominant over the rest, but

a just proportion and beautiful harmony is maintained among the whole. His mental and moral powers are cultivated with equal success. He has wisdom as well as knowledge, without which, knowledge would be useless, or, what is still worse, would only make him the more capable of evil. He is a great man, not because he is remarkable for any one endowment, but because he possesses them all in a high state of cultivation.

Among these may be no stars of primary magnitude, yet there is a glorious constellation of the powers, virtues, and graces which adorn the human character. He has a strong mind, a discriminating judgment, a clear perception, a correct taste. His heart dilates with affection, his bosom burns with patriotism; he is simple without weakness, brave without rashness, generous without prodigality, dignified without ostentation; he is a gentleman, a scholar, a patriot, and a Christian. To this last trait much importance is to be attached. It is difficult to conceive of a great man who is not also a good man: and by a good man we mean one who has a profound reverence for the Chris-

tian religion, and a just sense of his obligations to God: one whose character is well guarded by moral principle, who acts for the best good of his fellow-men, and in view of the retributions of eternity. It cannot be too distinctly asserted, that "to be great is to be good." Such is the great man: and such an one will be great everywhere, at all times, and under all circumstances. He possesses such power of adaptation, that he is seldom or never surprised by events he is unprepared to meet. He is great in peace, and great in war, great in the cabinet, and in the field; at home and abroad, in public and in private, he is great: he is great while living, and continues to wield an influence when his tongue is silent in death.

And such a man was Mr. John Wesley. We do not pretend that his intellect was of the very highest order, or that he was entirely free from every kind of defect. This is more than can be claimed for any merely human being. Yet few have equalled him in the possession, and combination of natural and acquired abilities. His mind was quite above the ordinary grade, and so evenly balanced as to exclude all eccentricity.

There was a fulness, or rotundity in his capacity rarely to be met with. His apprehension was clear, his penetration quick, and his judgment, if not infaliable, was nicely discriminative and sound. The processes of a logical argument were conducted with the utmost ease: the lurking sophism was detected when most men would have passed it unnoticed. And his corollaries were seldom, if ever, defective. Finer examples of the application of the principles of logic, will hardly be found in any English author, than may be seen in his controversial works.

As A SCHOLAR, his position was conspicuous. He was an acknowledged critic in the Latin and Greek classics; and was well acquainted with Hebrew, as well as with most of the European languages now in use. But the Greek was his favorite language, in which his knowledge was extensive and accurate. He published grammars of five different languages, in most of which he wrote and conversed fluently, and when circumstances called for it, performed public service. He was familiar with the field of natural philosophy, though a determined opposer of the infidel speculations of philosophers

by which God is excluded from the supervision and government of the universe he has created. In mathematics, he had studied Euclid, Keil, Sir Isaac Newton's optics, &c. &c., though he did not spend much time upon the abstruse and higher branches of that science. His scientific attainments were exceedingly varied: his knowledge in all the branches usually taught and studied, was at least respectable; in many, profound. In a word, as a man of deep, sound, varied, and sanctified learning, he has had few equals; superiors, perhaps, none.

As A WRITER, Mr. Wesley may be held up as a model deservedly worthy of imitation. He gave much attention to the rules of correct composition when young, and before he knew to what important uses his pen would be devoted. His subsequent practice made him perfectly master of the art; and the service he did to the cause of truth and piety by his numerous publications, controversial and practical, was scarcely less than that effected hy his personal influence as a preacher and pastor. In one respect it has been vastly more. His personal influence ceased with his natural life, but as long as purit propriety, pre-

cision and simplicity are admired as characteristics of a good style, his writings will be read as models of perfection in English composition; and so long as men love truth more than error, and relish the logical and moral force of an argument which vindicates and gives triumph to the one, while it refutes and covers the other with disgrace—above all, while men love experimental religion and Bible holiness, and take pleasure in the perusal of discourses and essays which illustrate and enforce these subjects with rare power and beauty, the sermons and other writings of John Wesley will live, be read, and highly prized by successive generations of Christians.

He did not write for fame, and yet in this respect he has gained what was unsought. Content with doing good, he used no trappings merely to please or to gain applause. "The distinguishing character of his style is brevity and perspicuity. He never lost sight of the rule which Horace gives."

> "*Est brevitate opus, ut currat sententia, neu se*
> *Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.*"
>
> TRANSLATION.
>
> "Concise your diction, let your sense be clear,
> Nor with a weight of words fatigue the ear."

His words were well chosen, expressive, precise; his sentences commonly marked by clearness, unity, and strength. In every case the aim is apparent; it is to convince, instruct, and save.

As a Poet, Mr. Wesley is also entitled to notice. The talent for poetry seems to have been quite natural to the family, for several generations, and quite a number of respectable specimens from different members of it, are preserved. The father of Mr. Wesley was considerably gifted in this way, and much that he has written will pass for good poetry, in spite of criticism. He possessed a vein of satire which he sometimes used in his poetic effusions with good effect. The following is an amusing example.

Having dined in company with several others, at the house of a gentleman, noted for his avarice, he was invited to return thanks for the refreshment. Instead of using a form composed for such occasions, he delivered himself impromptu in the following lines:

"Thanks for this feast, for 'tis no less
Than eating manna in the wilderness,
Here meagre famine bears controlless sway,
And ever drives each fainting wretch away;

Yet here (O how beyond a saint's belief,)
We've known the glories of a chine of beef,
Here chimneys smoke which never smoked before,
And we have dined, where we shall dine no more."

We are bound to suppose his object was to administer a wholesome reproof rather than create amusement.

But Mr. Charles Wesley, the brother of John, seemed to have most favor with the Muses. The most of his poetry is decidedly good. It is principally devotional, and founded on passages of the Word of God. Most of the hymns sung in the Methodist congregations throughout the world, were composed by him. In some respects he was inferior to Watts, but in others decidedly superior. He occasionally wrote on other than sacred subjects. He concludes a piece, on "A Man of Fashion," in the following lines:—

"The great his oracles he makes,
Copies their vices and mistakes;
Custom pursues, his only rule,
And lives an ape, and dies a fool."

A few days before he died, having been silent for some time, he called Mrs. Wesley to him, and dictated to her the following lines:—

"In age and feebleness extreme,
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
Jesus, my only hope thou art,
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;
O! could I catch a smile from thee,
And drop into eternity!"*

John Wesley gave less attention to poetry than his brother, and as a poet, does not rank as high. Yet he is inferior, perhaps, only in a single particular. There is in his poetic compositions less vivacity—less that is inspiring—soul-stirring. Yet even in this he sometimes excelled, as, for instance, in the hymn commencing,

"How happy is the pilgrim's lot;
How free from every anxious thought."

One whose treasure is laid up in heaven, can hardly read this hymn without catching the inspiration of the theme. Especially when he comes to the place where the poet seems to command a faith which pierces the veil, and cries out,

"There is my house and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home,"

he will feel, like Paul, a desire to "depart and be with Christ."

* See Appendix.

As another specimen of soul-moving poetry, take the hymn commencing,

"I thirst, thou wounded lamb of God,
To wash me in thy cleansing blood;
To dwell within thy wounds; there pain
Is sweet, and life or death is gain."

Mark the last verse,—

"Hence our hearts melt, our eyes o'erflow,
Our words are lost, nor will we know,
Nor will we think of aught beside,—
My Lord, my Love, is crucified."

As another example still, we may select the 825th hymn of the Methodist Collection:—

"O THOU, to whose all-searching sight,
The darkness shineth as the light,
Search, prove my heart, it pants for thee;
O burst these bonds and set it free."

For this essential element of poetry, however, he fell below the standard of perfection maintained by his brother Charles. Yet as a poet he is respectable, to say the least, and his hymns will be sung by the pious as long as the generation of the righteous remains. We must also dwell a moment upon the character of Wesley

As A PREACHER.—He wrote more or less upon

every topic he discussed in the pulpit, and before he died, published one hundred and fifty of his sermons; yet after he commenced his itinerant career, he seldom preached from notes. Usually, his sermons were strictly extemporaneous. By constant practice, this method of preaching became perfectly easy; and he could deliver a sermon without the labor of committing it to paper, with as little effort and embarrassment as he would experience in conversation with a friend. His experience in religion being deep and spiritual, his knowledge of human nature profound, his acquaintance with books extensive, his familiarity with the word of God perfect, and his comprehension of theology, in all its branches, systematic and thorough, he was always ready, upon short notice, to discuss any point within the range of subjects appropriate for the pulpit. If his sermons were not always masterly, they possessed certain traits of excellence so peculiar, that none but a master could have preached them.

He was not a Boanerges; his eloquence was not of the thundering description,—he did not take his audiences by storm, as Whitefield some-

times did. His elocution was more like that which Homer ascribes to Ulysses:—

> "When he speaks, what elocution flows,
> Soft as the fleeces of descending snows."

In his pulpit exercises he had but one object in view; to win souls to Christ, and build them up in holiness. His subjects were all chosen with reference to this end, and his mode of address had no other aim. Everything foreign to this object was of set purpose avoided. Nothing fanciful, or intended merely for display, was ever indulged in. He sought only to convince the judgment, affect the heart, and reform the life, and his manner was adapted directly to this purpose. "His attitude was graceful and easy; his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive; his voice not loud, but clear and manly; his style neat, simple, and perspicuous, and admirably suited to the capacity of his hearers." He at once convinced his audience of his entire sincerity, and found little difficulty in holding the attention of the rudest multitude.

As a Christian, his experience was deep and uniform. Grace held a pleasing sway over every faculty of the soul, every affection of the heart

He was equally free from moping melancholy, and undignified levity. His spirit was ever bright, and buoyant with Christian cheerfulness.

The Bible was his text-book—the man of his counsel in all things relating to religious doctrine and practice. He received its teachings with unqualified confidence. He regarded it as the infallible standard of truth—the end of controversy; and placed little reliance upon any conclusions not sanctioned by its teachings. His discourses were always enriched by its precious words. Always and everywhere he was "*homo unius libri.*"

He was a great lover of plain-dealing; open rebuke was prized more highly than secret love. As he was never offended at being told honestly and plainly by others what they supposed to be his faults, so he conscientiously endeavored to fulfil the apostolic injunction, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." And in this he was no respecter of persons. Indeed, the more friendship he experienced from individuals, the stronger did he feel the obligation to point out to them the sins which were likely to prove their ruin.

He was honored with the friendship of a wealthy and distinguished Baronet; he repaid his kindness by writing an affectionate and admonitory letter, of which the following is an extract: "You are on the borders of the grave, as well as I. Shortly we must both appear before God. When it seemed to me some months since, that my life was near an end, I was troubled that I had not dealt plainly with you. This you will allow me to do now, without any reserve, in the fear and in the presence of God. I reverence you for your office as a magistrate. I believe you to be an honest, upright man; I love you for having protected an innocent people from their cruel and lawless oppressors: but so much the more am I obliged to say (though I judge not, God is the Judge), I fear you are covetous; that you love the world: and if you do, as sure as the word of God is true, you are not in a state of salvation. I must once more earnestly entreat you to consider yourself, and God, and eternity. As to yourself, you are not the proprietor of anything, no, not of one shilling in the world. You are only a steward of what another intrusts you with, to be laid out not according to your will,

but his. And what would you think of your steward, if he laid out what is called your money according to his own will and pleasure? Is not God the sole proprietor of all things? And are not you to give an account to him for every part of his goods? And O, how dreadful an account if you have expended any part of them, not according to his will, but your own? Is not death at hand? And are not you and I, just stepping into eternity? Are we not just going to appear in the presence of God, and that naked of all worldly goods? Will you then rejoice in the money you have left behind you? Or in that you have given to support a family, as it is called? that is, in truth, to support the pride, and vanity, and luxury which you have yourself despised all your life long? O sir, I beseech you, for the sake of God, for the sake of your own immortal soul, examine yourself whether you do not love money! If so, you cannot love God. And if we die without the fear of God, what remains? Only to be banished from him, forever and ever."

Another instance may be found in a letter he addressed to one of his preachers.

"Dear S.," says he, "you know that I love you; ever since I knew you, I have neglected no opportunity of showing it, that was in my power. And you know I esteem you for your zeal and activity, for your love of discipline, and for your gifts which God has given you; particularly, quickness of apprehension, and readiness of utterance, especially in preaching and prayer.

"Therefore I am jealous over you, lest you should lose any of the things you have gained, and not receive a full reward; and the more so, because I fear you are wanting in other respects. And who will venture to tell you so? You will scarce know how to bear it from me, unless you lift up your heart to God. If you do this, I may venture to tell you what I fear, without any further preface. I fear you think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Do you not think too highly of your own understanding? of your gifts? particularly in preaching, as if you were the very best preacher in the connection? of your own importance? as if the work of God here or there depended wholly, or mainly on you? and of your popularity? which I have found to be a surprise far less, even in L—, than I expected. The

"May not this be much owing to your want of brotherly love? With what measure you mete, men will measure to you again. I fear there is something unloving in your spirit; something not only of roughness, but of harshness, yea of sourness! . . . .

"I am afraid lest your want of love to your neighbors should spring from your want of love to God; from want of thankfulness. I have sometimes heard you speak, in a manner that made me tremble; indeed, in terms that not only a weak Christian, but even a serious deist would scruple to use.

"I fear you greatly want evenness of temper. Are you not generally, too high, or too low? Are not all your passions too lively? your anger in particular? Is it not too soon raised? and is it not often too impetuous? causing you to be violent, boisterous,—bearing down all before you?

"Now—lift up your heart to God, or you will be angry at *me*. But I must go a little further. I fear you are greatly wanting in the government of your tongue. You are not exact in relating facts. I have observed it myself. You are apt to amplify; to enlarge a little beyond

the truth. You cannot imagine, if others observe this how it will affect your reputation.

"But I fear you are more wanting in another respect, that you give a loose to your tongue when you are angry; that your language then, is not only sharp, but coarse, and ill-bred—if this be so, the people will not bear it. They will not take it either from *you* or from *me*, &c."

In this kind and plain manner did he reveal to his most intimate friends, their faults. He seldom lost a friend by his frankness, while he secured the unlimited confidence of many.

His CATHOLICITY, was another marked feature of his Christian character. Few minds have been more entirely free from sectarian bigotry. In this respect he excelled his brother Charles; and Mr. Whitefield was far less catholic in his feelings. And this is the more remarkable, from the fact that he had been trained in that school of religious bigotry, the high-church portion of the national establishment. Yet, as he grew up to manhood, his mind broke the shackles which have cramped the genius, and limited the usefulness of so many thousands, and he claimed as his brother Christian every true lover of the

Lord Jesus Christ, whatever their name, or de nominational distinctions. "The world was his parish," and he never allowed prejudice or bigotry to exclude him from any part of it to which he might have access. What he contended for, was truth and holiness, and in consistency with them, his charity and fellowship were co-extensive with the family of Christians. He had an eye to see, and a heart to love the virtues of the papist, as well as the piety of the churchman; and he did not scruple to recommend the perusal of books which he deemed useful, by whomsoever written.

To all who professed the Christian name, his language was, "If thy heart be right with my heart, as my heart is with thy heart, give me thy hand." And by this he did not mean an indifference to all opinions. "This," says he, "is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven. This unsettledness of thought, this being 'driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine,' is a great curse, not a blessing; an irreconcilable enemy to true catholicism." His meaning was this: if you love God, if you love the Lord Jesus Christ, if you love your neighbor

as yourself, if you have given your heart to God, and Christ is revealed in you the hope of glory, if you possess the faith which works by love and purifies the heart, I ask not in what points you may differ from me in opinion; being agreed in these respects, "give me thy hand." This spirit he diffused among his people, and it is chiefly owing to the blessing of God upon his example and teaching, that to the present time, they are cursed with less sectarian bigotry and denominational exclusiveness, than any other principal branch of the Christian Church.

Our sketch of the character of Wesley would be essentially defective, should we omit to speak of him as a PHILANTHROPIST. This is a shining trait among the cluster of excellencies which shed their glory on his name and memory. He was a great lover of mankind. An important and principal theme of pulpit discourse, with him, was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Not like Plato and his followers, did he despise and denounce the body as an enemy to the soul; he loved body and soul, according to their relative importance, and bestowed due honor upon each. Proof of this is seen in the

care he took of his own body, and his readiness to feed, clothe, and otherwise relieve the physical sufferings of all whose condition appealed to his humanity, as also, his untiring zeal in seeking the spiritual good of all classes.

His liberality to the poor had no limit but the extent of his means. He gave away, not a part of his income merely, but all that he had. And his means were not small. Few men have had a better chance to amass wealth than he. But he made no other use of the money which came into his hands, than to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, and give the Gospel to the poor. With his advantages, most other men would have laid up an independent fortune; but he saved nothing. "My own hands shall be my executors," said he, and when he died he left little more than enough to defray his funeral expenses. His rule was, "Get all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." How literally he adhered to this rule may be seen in the following account given by himself. When tutor at Oxford his salary for the first year was thirty pounds: "he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year re

ceiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two-and-thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty pounds, still he lived on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two." In this way he proceeded during life.

The Commissioners of His Majesty's Excise, supposing a man of his distinction must have a large quantity of silver-plate on which he should pay duty, as required by law, wrote him requiring him to make an entry of it, and intimating that his neglect or refusal to do so would oblige them to report his case to the proper authority. Mr. Wesley answered as follows:

"SIR,—I have *two* silver teaspoons at London, and *two* at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread.

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."

His philanthropy was based upon the most enlightened views of the constitution and relations of man. He believed that God had "made

of one blood" all nations of the earth—that in their natural rights all men are equal—and that in respect to redemption, and the principles of his retributive administration, God is no respecter of persons. He was an uncompromising enemy of all institutions and business pursuits, which acted unequally or oppressively, and found their prosperity in the poverty and degradation of the masses.

He therefore deprecated in strong and severe terms those giant evils which give birth to such a numerous progeny of vices and miseries. Among these are intemperance and slavery. On the question of temperance, he occupied ground one hundred years ago, which by many would be considered ultra at the present time. In his sermon on the use of Money, he holds the following language:

"Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbor in his body. Therefore, we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is eminently all that liquid fire commonly called drams or spirituous liquors. It is true these may have a place in medicine: they may be of use in some bodily disorders; although there

would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner. Therefore, such as prepare and sell them only for this end, may keep their conscience clear. But who are they? Who prepare them only for this end? Do you know ten such distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale; neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep; and what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them: the curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of these! The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell. Blood, blood is there: the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art 'clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day;' canst thou hope to deliver down thy fields of blood to the third generation? Not

so, for there is a God in heaven; therefore thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, 'thy memorial shall perish with thee.'"

In his Thoughts on Slavery, addressing himself to those who buy the slave after he is kidnapped and abducted from his native land, he pronounces men-buyers equally guilty,—"exactly on a level with men-stealers. Indeed, you say, 'I pay honestly for my goods; and I am not concerned to know how they are come by.' Nay, but you are; you are deeply concerned to know they are honestly come by; otherwise you are a partaker with a thief, and are not a jot honester than him. But you know they are not honestly come by; you know they are procured by means nothing near so innocent as picking of pockets, housebreaking, or robbing upon the highway. You know they are procured by a deliberate series of more complicated villainy (of fraud, robbery, and murder) than was ever practised either by Mohammedans or Pagans; in particular by murders of all kinds; by the blood of the innocent poured upon the ground like water.

"Now it is your money that pays the merchant, and through him the captain and the African butchers. You therefore are guilty, yea, principally guilty, of all these frauds, robberies, and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in motion; they would not stir a step without you; therefore, the blood of all these wretches who die before their time, whether in their country, or elsewhere, lies upon your head. The blood of thy brother (for, whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of Him that made him) "crieth against thee from the earth;" from the ship and from the waters. O, whatever it costs, put a stop to its cry, before it is too late; instantly, at any price,—deliver thyself from blood-guiltiness. Thy hands, thy bed, thy furniture, thy house, thy lands, are at present stained with blood. Surely, it is enough; accumulate no more guilt; spill no more the blood of the innocent! Do not hire another to shed blood. Whether you are a Christian or no, show yourself a man; be not more savage than a lion, or a bear!

"Perhaps you will say, 'I do not buy any negroes; I only use those left me by my father.'

So far, so well; but is it enough to satisfy your own conscience? Had your father, have you, has any man living, a right to use another as a slave? It cannot be, even setting revelation aside. It cannot be, that either man, or contract, can give any war, such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen. Much less is it possible that any child of man should ever be born a slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air: and no human law can deprive him of that right which he derives from the law of nature.

"If therefore you have any regard to justice (to say nothing of mercy, nor the revealed law of God), render unto all their due. Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all chains, all compulsion! Be gentle towards all men; and see that you invariably do to others as you would they should do unto you."

In a letter supposed to have been written to that celebrated philanthropist, Wilberforce, he says—

"Unless the divine power has raised you up to be as '*Athanasius contra mundum*' (Athanasius against the world) I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you. Are all of them together stronger than God? 'O be not weary in well-doing!' Go on in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it."

The philanthropy of Wesley, was not blind, flashy, and fanatical; it was founded on liberal and enlightened views of the constitution, relations, and accountability of man—it was guided by the teachings of reason and revelation, and burned in his heart with a steady, and perpetual flame. Its comprehension was worthy of the dignity of human nature, and the application of its principles was bounded only by the family of man.

We close this portraiture, by contemplating WESLEY AS HE APPEARED IN SOCIAL LIFE.

He was the charm of every circle in which he moved. There was in his manner, no air of superiority, as though he thought himself entitled to claim the homage of all others, but quite the reverse. He was perfectly free from ostentation, and his manners marked by the utmost simplicity. And yet by common consent the company deferred to him, and allowed him to choose and lead the entertainment of the occasion.

For this, his qualities of mind, and extensive information gave him the most perfect fitness. Prepossessing in his appearance, easy and pleasing in his mode of address, with an inexhaustible fund of useful knowledge, illustrated by numerous facts collected during his eventful life—his conversation being cheerful and sprightly, his company was both entertaining and instructive, and without any apparent design on his part, he captivated the minds and hearts of all listeners.

His colloquial powers were of the highest order. The celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson will be acknowledged good authority on this point. He was personally acquainted with Mr. Wesley, and remarked respecting him,—"Mr. Wesley's conversation is good; he talks well on every sub-

ject; I could converse with him all night." "Very lately," says one who knew him, "I had an opportunity, for some days together, of observing Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavored to consider him, not so much with the eye of a friend, as with the impartiality of a philosopher: and I must declare, every hour I spent in his company afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent;' and wherever he went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanor, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation, we might be at a loss whether to admire most his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and the serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw in his uninter-

rupted cheerfulness, the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourse; no applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently, 'May my last end be like his.'" The lines of Cowper, so perfectly descriptive of the subject of this chapter, may properly form its conclusion:—

"O, I have seen, (nor hope perhaps in vain,
Ere life go down, to see such sights again,)
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,
Who never saw the sword he could not wield.
Grave without dulness, learned without pride,
Exact but not precise, though meek, keen-eyed;
A man that could have foiled at their own play,
A dozen would-bes of the modern day;
Who, when occasion justified its use,
Had wit as bright as ready to produce;
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,
Or from philosophy's enlightened page,
His rich materials, and regale your ear
With strains it was a privilege to hear.
Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,
And his chief glory, was the gospel theme:
Then he was copious as old Greece or Rome;
His happy eloquence seemed there at home;
Ambitious not to shine, or to excel,
But to treat justly, what he loved so well."

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

If I am traduced by tongues, which neither know
My faculties, nor person, yet will be
The chroniclers of my doing,—let me say,
'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
That virtue must go through.

SHAKSPEARE'S HENRY VIII.

IT is now considerably more than a century since the commencement of the Wesleyan Reformation. The principal instrument in effecting it has slept in his honored tomb sixty years. The necessity which called for it—the causes which led to it—the agents employed in it—the events connected with it—and the results which have flowed, and are still flowing, from it, have been before the world during this period for inspection and criticism, approval or condemnation, according to the opinions, prejudices, and tastes of those who have assumed to pass upon them.

As in the political, so also in the moral world,

a revolution supposes the existing state of society more or less broken up, and a new order of things introduced and established. In both cases the change will be attended with convulsions, and incidental evils will arise for which the Reformation is not responsible, and which usually disappear when the change sought has been achieved, and the troubled elements or agitated waters have been reduced to a state of calmness. These evils generally show themselves most prominently in the heat of the conflict, and before there has been opportunity to realize the benign fruits of a salutary change.

It is precisely at this point, that the enemies of such Revolution or Reformation delight to contemplate it. They seize hold of its incidental evils and extravagances, and, looking at them through a medium which magnifies them far beyond their real turpitude, employ them to weaken public confidence in the utility of the movement, to counteract its influence, and preoccupy the public mind with hatred and disgust. Nothing can be more illogical or unjust. On the same principle, a skilful and successful surgical operation, in a case where life is depend-

ing, may be disparaged and condemned, because of the pain inflicted upon the patient, or the disagreeable sensations produced in the minds of spectators. It would be just as reasonable to "pull down the scaffolding from a half-finished edifice; then point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance, and ask in scorn where the promised splendor and comfort are to be found. If such miserable sophisms were to prevail, there never would be a good house or a good government in the world." Nor would there ever be a good moral or religious state of society.

"There is," says the author just quoted (Macaulay), "only one cure for the evils which newly acquired freedom produces, and that one is *freedom!* When a prisoner leaves his cell, he cannot bear the light of day; he is unable to discriminate colors, or recognize faces. But the remedy is not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty, may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become half-blind in the house of bondage: but let them gaze

on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason. The extreme violence of opinion subsides. Hostile theories correct each other. The scattered elements of truth cease to conflict, and begin to coalesce. And at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos." "If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait forever." This reasoning, so apt and just, is a sufficient answer to all objections which short-sighted or prejudiced minds have brought against the Lutheran or Wesleyan Reformation, on account of the individual instances of extravagance, enthusiasm, and dogmatism, with which they were incidentally connected. The true method of judging of the character of a revolution or reformation, is to take into view the condition of society, necessity of a change, the aims and purposes of the reformers, the motives and principles by which they are moved and governed, and the permanent results, or fruits realized. Compare the state in which the reformation found society, with that in which it left it. If despotism has been dethroned, learning liberated from prison,

religion revived and science advanced: if the public mind has been assisted to rise above degrading superstitions which had held it in bondage for ages, if dogmatic theology has been brought into disrepute, ecclesiastical tyranny broken, and conscience disenthralled—if the Bible has received a free and rapid circulation, and the fearful ravages of infidelity have been arrested—if society has been elevated, a more just and comprehensive view of the moral government of God, the nature of the Gospel and the claims of true religion imparted—above all, if experimental and practical piety have been permanently advanced, tens of thousands truly converted and radically reformed, and a stronger, healthier, more active, and more efficient Christian influence diffused through the Church of Christ; the collateral and temporary evils and abuses which may have marked the progress of these splendid achievements, should never be thought of in the light of objections. There were indeed fewer enthusiasts, and less real enthusiasm in the reformation under Wesley, than in that under Luther. For this several reasons may be assigned.

1. There was less impetuosity in the character of Wesley, than in that of Luther. His calmness combined with his firmness, saved him from much of the rashness into which an impetuous spirit is usually betrayed, and the example was not without its influence in restraining and preventing abuses among his adherents.

2. The corruption and superstition which held sway, were more gross and degrading, and the people more ignorant and besotted in the fifteenth, than in the eighteenth century. The revulsion produced by the Reformation in Germany, was more sudden and marvellous to those who had been accustomed to nothing but Romish despotism. The contrast between the old and new state of things was more strongly marked, and the people were less prepared than in England, to make a rational and prudent use of their newly acquired advantages and blessings.

3. The reformation by Wesley was free from political questions and excitements. Not so in Germany. There the reigning corruptions and superstitions were upheld by secular power as well as ecclesiastical authority. The reformer

was obliged to contend with both, and he must conquer both, or no substantial good could be achieved. This led to much unholy excitement, and many unhappy consequences. Many from witnessing the abuses of government, conceived the fanatical idea of dispensing with government entirely. And some of the reformers were led to adopt measures very questionable in their character.

Nothing of this kind occurred in England. The government was not hostile to true religion. It allowed the rights of conscience in respect to doctrine, and was not pledged against different forms of worship. Wesley sought no change in the government, nor in the organization of the Church establishment. He only aimed to revive primitive Christianity, and spread scriptural holiness over the land. In doing this he used no worldly policy, and engaged in no political conflicts. His weapons were not carnal, yet "mighty through God" in pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan. He often had severe conflicts, but they were with the "rulers of the darkness of this world," "with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickedness in high places."

Much of what religious formalism and skeptical philosophy will ever term enthusiasm, existed, and it is likely that some cases of real fanaticism occurred; but when we remember how much hostility the *spirit* and *power* of true religion have ever met with, that the friends of Christ said, "He is beside himself," and Paul was denominated "mad," we need not wonder that enthusiasm should be alleged against that remarkable work of God promoted by Wesley, nor consider it worth our while to give it any farther attention.

But as this charge has been made distinctly against the person of Wesley himself, we may be allowed a word or two in his defence. If determination, earnestness, zeal, and perseverance in a good cause, constitute enthusiasm, then Wesley was an enthusiast; otherwise, not. The real enthusiast acts blindly. He is moved by impulse, irrespective of the dictates of reason or revelation. But such was not the character or conduct of Wesley. No man understood the use, or prized the advantages of reason more truly than he. And as to revelation, it was his highest authority on all questions of religion and

morals. "To the law and the testimony," was his motto. If any man speak not according to these, "it is because there is no light in him."

In no exceptionable or vulgar sense, was Wesley an enthusiast. His enthusiasm for religion was like that of Lord Nelson for his country. "When the highest interests of man were concerned, he made no account of precedent or public opinion, or maxims of human, or even of ecclesiastical precedence. The Church of England appeared to him to have fallen into a state of stupor, like that of the ancient Jewish Church; and it was his persuasion, that a kind of second John the Baptist, a 'voice of one crying in the wilderness,' was necessary to awaken it." To this work he considered himself providentially called; and because he attached more importance to the revival of vital religion, the prevalence of Bible holiness, and the salvation of thousands, than to mere modes and forms, he has been branded as a schismatic and enthusiast. If this be enthusiasm, the more it prevails the better it will be for the Church and the world.

The same author quoted above (Alexander Knox, Esquire), replies to the charge of ambi-

tion in the following manner: "I must declare, that the slightest suspicion of pride, ambition, selfishness, in any shape or form, or personal gratification of whatever kind, stimulating Mr. Wesley in any instance, or mixing in any measure with the movements of his life, never once entered into my mind. That such charges were made by his opponents, I could not be ignorant. But my deep impression was, and it certainly remains unimpaired, that since the days of the apostles there has not been a human being more thoroughly exempt from all those frailties of human nature than John Wesley.

"That he had uncommon acuteness in fitting expedients to conjunctures, is most certain; this, in fact, was his great talent. But in exerting this faculty, he was unspeakably aided by the intentional rectitude of his leading purpose. To train as many persons as he could influence to habitual and elevated piety, by a settled plan of methodical, social, and anti-secular devotion, was his uniform and exclusive object. In this pursuit, none other than morally innocent means could be thought of; and while he chose them not only with that honesty which is the best pol-

icy, but with uncommon instinctive sagacity, his constitutional energy supported his religious zeal in carrying them into steady and systematical practice.

"That Mr. Wesley's natural feelings were gratified with the progress of his society, cannot be questioned; nor that, with the partiality of a parent, he was liable to palliate its imperfections, and to over-estimate its good effects. I grant, too, that in governing the body which he had formed, he experienced much of the pleasure which every one feels in exercising those talents wherein he excels. But I am persuaded that these necessary and useful movements of our nature never existed in any mere human being with less alloy of selfishness than in John Wesley."

One other charge should, perhaps, receive a passing notice, viz., that of credulity and superstition. This charge is exceedingly vague, and it is difficult to know how to reply to it. We suspect, however, were it defined it would amount to about this: he believed without doubt the whole Bible, regarding it as infallible truth; and, he had an unsuspecting faith in hu-

man testimony. With all infidels, and semi-infidels, and with some who bear the Christian name, faith in the entire truth of the Bible is regarded *weakness* or *credulity*. But the real Christian will hardly deem such confidence to call for an apology. The Bible teaches the doctrine of a particular providence—that there is an invisible world—that there are good and evil spirits, some of whom God employs to effect his designs, and others he permits within certain limitations, to display their malignant feelings and dispositions in opposition to Him and his people. All this Mr. Wesley believed. In his extensive travels through England, Ireland, and Scotland, he met with many extraordinary accounts of strange appearances, and interpositions, some of which seemed to himself to be supernatural. It was his practice to publish these accounts as he received them, upon the testimony of others, and, without recording any opinion of his own, leave them to the judgment of the public. In some instances he may have attached more importance than was due to these accounts, and upon this mainly is founded the charge of superstition. But if this be sufficient to sustain

the allegation against him, the most eminent philosophers and divines (as Dr. Samuel Johnson and Martin Luther) who have lived either before or since his day, are open to the same charge; and while he is found in such excellent company, we need not be very solicitous for his reputation.

It forms no part of our design to exhibit the statistics of Methodism. These may be seen in detail elsewhere. But we cannot forbear to remark in a general way, upon the astonishing results which have flowed, and are flowing from the life and labors of the man, to whose name and memory these pages are devoted. Surely the little one has become a thousand, and the small one a great nation. In numbers, in education, character, and influence, the increase of the denomination of Christians, raised up, organized, and governed, personally by Wesley for more than fifty years, and subsequent to his death, by rules and regulations established by his wisdom and authority, is unparalleled by anything similar since the days of the Apostles. And the end is not yet. Methodism is now in a position to exert a stronger and more successful influence in the work of saving the world than

at any former period. She has the vantage ground, and the facilities for usefulness. If properly used, with becoming reliance on the blessing of God, the magnitude and value of her spiritual conquests cannot now be estimated. The elements of spiritual life have been imparted to religious bodies before inactive and lifeless—the spiritual energies of the protestant world have been called into action, harmonized, and directed towards the object of Christian enterprise. Indeed, so far as we can now see and judge, the Christian world is, under God, indebted to the spirit called into action by the Wesleyan reformation, more than to any other cause, for the spiritual health which pervades the churches, the success which is now attending their efforts, and the cheering prospect which lays before them. May this same spirit—Bible holiness enjoyed and professed—true religion in the heart and in the life—"Christianity in earnest," to publish the Gospel and save a lost world, continue to accumulate a power in the Church and in the world which shall bear away the pillars of the temple of sin, and leave idolatry and infidelity without a support or covering.

APPENDIX.

As allusion has been made in the preceding pages to the violent persecutions the Wesleys were obliged to meet in their course as itinerant preachers, we subjoin the following account, as a specimen both in manner and spirit, of what was not very uncommon.

"Thursday, October 20th, 1743," says Mr. John Wesley, "after preaching to a small, attentive congregation, I rode to Wednesbury. At twelve I preached in a ground near the middle of the town, to a far larger congregation than was expected, on 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever.' I believe every one present felt the power of God. And no creature offered to molest us, either going, or coming; but the Lord fought for us, and we held our peace.

"I was writing at Francis Ward's in the afternoon, when the cry arose that the mob had beset

the house. We prayed that God would disperse them; and so it was; one went this way and another that, so that in half an hour, not a man was left. I told our brethren, 'Now is the time for us to go;' but they pressed me exceedingly to stay. So, that I might not offend them, I sat down, though I foresaw what would follow. Before five, the mob surrounded the house again, in greater numbers than ever. The cry of one and all was, 'Bring out the minister; we will have the minister.' I desired one to take their captain by the hand and bring him into the house. After a few sentences interchanged between us, the lion was become a lamb. I desired him to go and bring one or two more of the most angry of his companions. He brought in two, who were ready to swallow the ground with rage; but in two minutes they were as calm as he. I then bade him make way that I might go out among the people. As soon as I was in the midst of them, I called for a chair, and, standing up, asked, 'What do you want with me?' Some said, 'We want you to go with us to the justice.' I replied, 'That I will with all my heart.' I then spoke a few words, which God applied; so

that they cried out with might and main, 'The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defence.' I asked, 'Shall we go to the justice to-night, or in the morning?' Most of them cried, to-night, to-night; on which I went before, and two or three hundred followed; the rest returning whence they came.

"The night came on before we had walked a mile, together with heavy rain. However, on we went to Bently-Hall, two miles from Wednesbury. One or two ran before to tell Mr. Lane, that they had brought Mr. Wesley before his worship. Mr. Lane replied, "What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Go, and carry him back again.' By this time the main body came up, and began knocking at the door. A servant told them, Mr. Lane was in bed. His son followed and asked what was the matter. One replied, 'Why, an't please you, they sing Psalms all day: nay, and make folks rise at five in the morning; and what would your worship advise us to do?' 'To go home,' said Mr. Lane, 'and be quiet.'

"Here they were at a full stop, till one advised to go to Justice Persehouse, at Walsal.

All agreed to this, so we hastened on, and about seven came to his house. But Mr. P. likewise sent word that he was in bed. Now they were at a stand again; but at last they all thought it their wisest course to make the best of their way home. About fifty of them undertook to convey me; but we had not gone a hundred yards, when the mob of Walsal came pouring in like a flood, and bore down all before them. The Darlaston mob made what defence they could; but they were weary as well as outnumbered; so that, in a short time, many being knocked down, the rest ran away, and left me in their hands.

"To attempt speaking was vain: for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea; so they dragged me along till they came to the town, when, seeing the door of a large house open, I attempted to go in, but a man, catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. They made no more stay, till they had carried me through the main street, from one end of the town to the other. I continued speaking all the time to those within hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open, I made towards it,

and would have gone in; but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying, 'they would pull the house down to the ground.' However, I stood at the door, and asked, 'Are you willing to hear me speak?' Many cried out, 'No, no, knock his brains out; down with him, kill him at once.' Others said, 'Nay, but we will hear him first.' I began speaking, 'What evil have I done? Which of you all have I injured in word or deed?' and continued speaking about a quarter of an hour, when my voice suddenly failed; then the floods began to lift up their voice again; many crying out, 'Bring him away, bring him away.'

"In the meantime my strength of voice returned, and I broke out aloud in prayer. And now, the man who just before headed the mob, turned and said, 'Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.' Two or three of his followers confirmed his words, and got close to me immediately. At the same time, the gentleman in the shop cried out, 'For shame! for shame! let him go.' An honest butcher, who was a little farther off, said it was a shame they

should do thus; and pulled back four or five, one after another, who were running on most fiercely. The people then, as if it had been by common consent, fell back to the right and left; while those three or four men took me between them, and carried me through them all. But on the bridge the mob rallied again: we therefore went on one side over the mill-dam, and thence through the meadows, till a little before ten God brought me safe to Wednesbury; having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands."

Having escaped the hands of the rioters in the manner here described, Mr. Wesley met his brother at Nottingham. Charles mentions this meeting in his journal.

"My brother came," says he, "delivered out of the mouth of the lions! His clothes were torn to tatters. He looked like a soldier of Christ. The mob of Wednesbury, Darlaston, and Walsal, were permitted to take and carry him about for several hours, with a full intent to murder him; but his work is not yet finished, or he had been now with the souls under the altar."

Soon after this, the leader of the mob was

converted, and united with the society. When asked what he thought of Mr. Wesley, he replied, 'Think of him! that he is a man of God; and God was on his side, when *so many* of us could not kill *one man*.'"

From the following account given by Mr. Charles Wesley, it appears he was as highly honored as his brother:

"February 25, 1747, was a day never to be forgotten. At seven o'clock I walked quietly to Mrs. Phillips's, and began preaching a little before the time appointed. For three quarters of an hour I invited a few listening sinners to Christ. Soon after, Satan's whole army assaulted the house. We kept our seats, and they rushed into the passage. Just then Mr. Borough, the constable, came, and seizing the spout of the engine, carried it off. They swore if he did not deliver it they would pull down the house. At that time they might have taken us prisoners; we were close to them, and none to interpose. But they hurried out to fetch the larger engine. In the meantime we were advised to send for the Mayor; but Mr. Mayor was gone out of town in the sight of the people, which gave

great encouragement to those who were already wrought up to a proper pitch by the curate, and the gentlemen of the town; particularly Mr. Sutton and Mr. Willy, dissenters, the two leading men. Mr. Sutton frequently came out to the mob, to keep up their spirits. He sent word to Mrs. Phillips, that if she did not turn that fellow out to the mob, he would send them to drag him out. Mr. Willy passed by again and again, assuring the rioters he would stand by them, and secure them from the law, do what they would.

"The rioters now began playing the larger engine; which broke the windows, flooded the rooms, and spoiled the goods. We were withdrawn to a small upper room in the back part of the house, seeing no way to escape their violence, as they seemed under the full power of the old murderer. They first laid hold on the man who kept the society-house, dragged him away, and threw him into the horse-pond, and, it was said, broke his back. We gave ourselves unto prayer, believing the Lord would deliver us; how or when, we saw not; nor any possible way of escaping. We therefore stood still to see the salvation of God. Every now and then

some or other of our friends would venture to us; but rather weakened our hands, so that we were forced to stop our ears, and look up. Among the rest, the Mayor's maid came, and told us her mistress was in tears about me; and begged me to disguise myself in woman's clothes, and try to make my escape. Her heart had been turned toward us by the conversion of her son, just on the brink of ruin. God laid his hand on the poor prodigal, and instead of running to sea, he entered the society. The rioters without continued playing their engine, which diverted them for some time; but their number and fierceness still increased, and the gentlemen supplied them with pitchers of ale, as much as they would drink. They were now on the point of breaking in, when Mr. Borough thought of reading the proclamation; he did so, at the hazard of his life. In less than the hour, of a thousand wild beasts, none were left but the guard. Our constable had applied to Mr. Street, the only justice in town, who would act. We found there was no help in man, which drove us closer to the Lord; and we prayed, with little intermission, the whole day.

"Our enemies, at their return, made their main assault at the back door, swearing horribly they would have me, if it cost them their lives. Many seeming accidents concurred to prevent their breaking in. The man of the house came home, and instead of turning me out, as they expected, took part with us, and stemmed the tide for some time. They now got a notion that I had made my escape, and ran down to the inn and played the engine there. They forced the innkeeper to turn out our horses, which he immediately sent to Mr. Clark's; which drew the rabble and their engine thither. But the resolute old man charged and presented his gun, till they retreated. Upon their revisiting us, we stood in jeopardy every moment. Such threatenings, curses, and blasphemies I have never heard. They seemed kept out by a continual miracle. I remembered the Roman senators sitting in the forum, when the Gauls broke in upon them; but thought there was a fitter posture for Christians, and told my companions they should take us off our knees. We were kept from all hurry, and discomposure of spirit, by a divine power resting upon us. We prayed and conversed as freely as

if we had been in the midst of our brethren; and had great confidence that the Lord would either deliver us from danger, or in it. In the height of the storm, just when we were falling into the hands of the drunken enraged multitude, Mr. Minton was so little disturbed, that he fell fast asleep.

"They were now close to us on every side, and over our heads untiling the roof. A ruffian cried out, 'There they are, behind the curtain.' At this time we fully expected their appearance, and retired to the furthermost corner of the room; and I said, 'This is the crisis.' In that moment, Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. We heard not a breath without, and wondered what was become of them. The silence lasted for three quarters of an hour, before any one came near us; and we continued in mutual exhortation and prayer, looking for deliverance. I often told my companions, 'Now, God is at work for us; he is contriving our escape; he can turn these leopards into lambs; can command the heathen to bring his children on their shoulders, and make our fiercest enemies the instruments of our deliver-

ance.' About three o'clock, Mr. Clark knocked at the door, and brought with him the persecuting constable. He said, 'Sir, if you will promise never to preach here again, the gentleman and I will agree to bring you safe out of town.' My answer was, 'I shall promise no such thing: setting aside my office, I will not give up my birthright as an Englishman, of visiting what place I please of his majesty's dominions.' 'Sir,' said the constable, 'we expect no such promise, that you will not come here again; only tell me that it is not your *present* intention, that I may tell the gentleman, who will secure your quiet departure.' I answered, 'I cannot come again at this time, because I must return to London a week hence. But *observe*, I make no promise of not preaching here, when the door is opened; and do not you say that I do.'

"He went away with this answer, and we betook ourselves to prayer and thanksgiving. We perceived it was the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in our eyes. The hearts of our adversaries were turned. Whether pity for us, or fear for themselves, wrought strongest, God

knoweth; probably the latter; for the mob were wrought up to such a pitch of fury, that their masters dreaded the consequence, and therefore went about appeasing the multitude, and charging them not to touch us in our departure.

"While the constable was gathering his *posse*, we got our things from Mr. Clark's, and prepared to go forth. The whole multitude were without, expecting us, and saluted with a general shout. The man Mrs. Naylor had hired to ride before her, was, as we perceived, one of the rioters. This hopeful guide was to conduct us out of the reach of his fellows. Mr. Minton and I took horse in the face of our enemies, who began clamoring against us: the gentlemen were dispersed among the mob to bridle them. We rode at a slow pace up the street, the whole multitude pouring along on both sides, and attending us with loud acclamations. Such fierceness, and diabolical malice I have not before seen in human faces. They ran up to our horses as if they would swallow us, but did not know which was Wesley. We felt great peace, and acquiescence in the honor done us, while the whole town were spectators of our march. When out of sight,

we mended our pace, and about seven o'clock came to Wrexall. The news of our danger was got thither before us; but we brought the welcome tidings of our deliverance. We joined in hearty prayer to our Deliverer, singing the hymn:

"'Worship and thanks, and blessing,
And strength ascribe to Jesus:—
Jesus alone defends his own,
When earth and hell oppress us.
Jesus with joy we witness,
Almighty to deliver;
Our seals set too, that God is true,
And reigns a king forever.

Omnipotent Redeemer,
Our ransomed souls adore thee:
Our Saviour thou, we find it now
And give thee all the glory.
We sing thine arm unshortened,
Brought through our sore temptation:
With heart and voice in thee rejoice,
The God of our salvation.

The world's, and Satan's malice,
Thou, Jesus, hast confounded;
And by thy grace, with songs of praise,
Our happy souls resounded.
Accepting our deliverance,
We triumph in thy favor;
And for the love which now we prove,
Shall praise thy name forever.'"

NOTE FROM PAGE 254.

TO THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

Come on, my Whitefield, (since the strife is past,
And friends at first are friends again at last),
Our hands, and hearts, and counsels, let us join,
In mutual league, t' advance the work divine.
Our one contention, now our single aim,
To pluck poor souls as brands out of the flame,
To spread the victory of that bloody cross,
And gasp our latest breath in the Redeemer's cause.

Too long, alas! we gave to Satan place,
When party-zeal put on an angel's face:
Too long we listened to the consuming fiend,
Whose trumpet sounded "For the faith contend:"
With hasty, blindfold rage in error's night,
Then did we with our fellow-soldiers fight!
We could not then our Father's children know,
But each mistook his brother for his foe.
Foes to the truth, can ye in conscience spare?
"Tear them," the tempter cried, "in pieces tear!"
So thick the darkness, so confused the noise,
We took the stranger's for the shepherd's voice:
Rash nature waved the controversial sword,
On fire to fight the battles of the Lord:
Fraternal love from every breast was driven
And bleeding Charity returned to heaven.
The Saviour saw our strife with pitying eye,
And cast a look that made the shadows fly:
Soon as the dayspring in his presence shone,
We found the two fierce armies were but one,
Common our hope, and family, our name,
Our arms, our captain, and our crown the same;
Enlisted all, beneath Emanuel's sign,
And purchased ev'ry soul with precious blood divine.

Then let us cordially again embrace,
Nor e'er infringe the league of gospel grace:
Let us in Jesus' name to battle go,
And turn our arms against the common foe;
Fight side by side, beneath the captain's eye,
Chase the Philistines; on their shoulders fly,
And, more than conquerors, in the harness die.

For whether I am born to "blush above,"
On earth suspicious of electing love,
Or you overwhelmed with honorable shame,
To shout the universal Saviour's name,
It matters not; if, all our conflicts past,
Before the great white throne we meet at last.
Our only care, while sojourning below,
Our real faith, by real love to show,
To blast the alien's hope, and let them see
How friends of jarring sentiments agree:
Not in a party's narrow banks confined,
Not by a sameness of opinions joined,
But cemented in the Redeemer's blood,
And bound together in the heart of God.

Can we forget from whence our union came,
When first we simply met in Jesus' name?
The name mysterious of the God unknown,
Whose secret love allured, and drew us on,
Through a long, lonely, legal wilderness,
To find the promised land of gospel peace.
True yoke-fellows we then agreed to draw
Th' intolerable burden of the law;
And, jointly laboring on with zealous strife,
Strengthened each other's hands to work for life;
To turn against the world our steady face,
And valiant for the truth, enjoy disgrace.

Then, when we served our God through fear alone,
Our views, our studies, and our hearts were one:

No smallest difference damped the social flame;
In Moses's school we thought and spoke the same.
And must we, now in Christ, with shame confess,
Our love was greater when our light was less?
When darkly through a glass, with servile awe,
We first the spiritual commandment saw,
Could we not then, our mutual love to show,
Through fire and water for each other go?
We could; we did. In a strange land I stood,
And beckoned thee to cross the Atlantic flood.
With true affection winged, thy ready mind
Left country, fame, and ease, and friends behind;
And, eager all heaven's counsels to explore,
Flew through the watery world, and grasped the shore.

Nor did I linger, at my friend's desire,
To tempt the furnace, and abide the fire;
When suddenly sent forth, from the highways
I called poor outcasts to the feast of grace.
Urged to pursue the work by thee begun,
Through good and ill report I still rush'd on,
Nor felt the fire of popular applause,
Nor fear'd the torturing flame in such a glorious cause.

Ah! wherefore did we ever *seem* to part,
Or clash in sentiment, while one in heart?
What dire device did the old serpent find,
To put asunder those whom God had joined?
From folly, and self-love opinion rose,
To sever friends who never yet were foes.
To baffle and divert our noblest aim,
Confound our pride and cover us with shame,
To make us blush beneath her short-lived power,
And glad the world with one triumphant hour.

But lo! the snare is broke, the captive's freed,
By faith on all the hostile powers we tread,
And crush through Jesus' strength, the serpent's head.

Jesus hath cast the curs'd accuser down,
Hath rooted up the tares by Satan sown,
Kindled anew the never-dying flame,
And re-baptized our souls into his name.

Soon as the virtue of his name we feel,
The storm of strife subsides, the sea is still,
All nature bows to his supreme command,
And two are one in his Almighty hand.
One in his hand, O may we still remain,
Fast bound in love's indissoluble chain:
(That adamant which time and death defies,
That golden chain, which draws us to the skies!)
His love the tie that binds us to his throne,
His love the bond that perfects us in one;
His love, (let all the ground of friendship see,)
His love alone constrains our hearts t' agree,
And gives the rivet of eternity.

THE END.

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